THE VIRTUE OF Humility.

Recommended to be Printed
By the late Reverend and Learned
Dr. *Henry Hammond*.

1 Pet. v. 5.

Be cloathed with Humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

London: Printed for *H. Brome* at the Gun at the Weſt End of S. *Pauls*. 1673.

G4647. H8

The PRINTER to the READER.

THE Treatiſe of Humility *was ſo acceptable to the Reverend Doctour* Hammond, *the great Example of Learning, Zeal and Humility (whoſe memory, as is ſaid of* Joſiah, *is like the compoſition of the Perfume that is made by the art of the Apothecary) that he wrote a very affectionate Letter to the Publiſher, commending the Book as a moſt excellent, proper and neceſſary diſcourſe, worthy the ſtudy of the Nobility, Gentry, and eſpecially the Clergy, as is particularly expreſſed in the fourth Chapter: And he highly admired the growth and perfection of that Grace expreſſed in the fifteenth Chapter, to the ſhame and reproach of our time. Sad is the condition of this our Nation, which hath neither been humbled by the Rod of Gods*

wrath in a moſt unnatural Rebellion and curſed Schiſme, nor allured to the conſtant practiſe and habit of the rare grace of chriſtian Humility by that more ſweet method of miraculous Mercy, in Reſtoring the King and Church.

The following Preface was ſeaſonable to the time of the firſt Impreſſion of this Book, which was in the year 1654. which is thought good to be continued for the Memorial of that great Judgement which was then upon us.

TO

TO THE

READER.

IN every age and nation, the ſins that provoke God to wrath are many, and the Seers or Remembrancers (ſo are Gods Miniſters call'd, and ſo they are) do ſigh and mourn for them, yea and forewarn and cry out againſt them, as in Ezek. 9. 4. The ſins of this our age and nation, which have provoked the Lord our God to pour out the vialls of his wrath upon us, though not eaſily numbred or named, yet that one onely ſin of Pride is ſo high, ſo preſumptuous, and ſo generall, that even for this ſin alone all the judgements which we have already felt, or do hereafter fear, are moſt due and juſt.

Bleſſed be the Lord our God, who hath hitherto in mercy, as a father, chaſtiſed us for our amendment; and not

in

in fury, as a Judge, utterly conſumed us.

And as we acknowledge his juſtice and mercy in puniſhing us, ſo we take notice of his wiſdome in chuſing ſuch inſtruments to puniſh us, men of mean and low rank, and of common parts and abilities. By theſe he doth admoniſh all the honourable, valiant, learned, and wiſe men of this nation; and as it were write our ſin in the character of our puniſhment; and in the low condition of theſe inſtruments of his anger and diſpleaſure, the rod of his wrath, he would abate and puniſh our great pride.

As Remembrancers, *we have a double office on which we attend. The one, to call and cry unto God night and day, with humble prayers and tears, to be merciful to his people, and to ſpare thoſe which he hath redeemed with his precious bloud, and not to be angry with them for ever. The other, to call and cry unto the whole nation, the proud and bold puniſhers with their vizours or forms of godlineſſe, as well as the puniſhed, to humble themſelves, to repent, to faſt, weep and mourn for our many and great wickedneſſes, eſpecially for our Pride.*

It may pleaſe God that, by his bleſſing, this little book may prove as a ſovereign

poultiſe

poultiſe or medicine to aſſwage the ſwelling tumor of pride in the hearts of all them that will humble themſelves ſo farre as to read it. Davids ſtone and ſling which ſlew proud Goliah, and by that meanes overthrew the pride and gallantry of a great army, gives ſome encouragement to me, that even the pride of the Army, of the City, of the whole nation, may be in ſome meaſure leſſened and abated by this ſmall book: wherein the reader will finde all the kindes and degrees of our pride plainly deſcribed, ſadly lamented, ſharply reproved; and thereby the neceſſity and excellency of the heavenly grace and ſweet vertue of Humility, *affectionately perſwaded unto, and commended.*

The God of power, wiſdome and mercy vouchſafe to give his bleſſing to this weak meanes, as prayeth.

Thine in Chriſt Jeſus,

W. B.

OF THE VERTUE OF HUMILITY.

CHAP. I.

Of the excellency of the Vertue of Humility, *and of the need we have thereof.*

LEarn of me, ſaith *Ieſus Chriſt* our *Saviour*, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, *and you ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls*; Mat. 11. 29. The whole life of *Chriſt* our *Lord* on earth, was led for our inſtruction, and he was the Maſter, and teacher of all the vertues, but eſpecially of this of *Humility*, which he deſired chiefly, that we ſhould learn. And this conſideration alone, may well ſerve to make us under-

ſtand, both the great excellency of this vertue, and the great need alſo which we have thereof, ſince the *Son* of *God* himſelf came down from Heaven to earth, to teach us the practiſe, and to make himſelf our inſtructor therein; and that, not only by word of mouth, but much more particularly, by his actions. For indeed his whole life was an example, and lively pattern of *Humility*.

Saint *Baſil* diſcourſing of the whole life of *Chriſt* our *Lord* even from his birth, obſerves and ſhews, how all his actions ſerved to teach us this vertue in moſt particular manner. *He would needs* (ſaith he) *be born of a mother who was poor in a poor open ſtable, and be layed in a manger, and be wrapped in miſerable clouts; he would needs be circumciſed like a ſinner, and fly into Egypt like a poor weak creature, and be baptized amongſt Publicans and ſinners like one of them. And afterward in the courſe of his life, when they had a mind to do him honour, and take him up for their King, he hid himſelf: but when they put diſhonour, and affronts upon him, he then preſented himſelf to them: when he was honoured and admired by men, yea and even by perſons*

wh

who were poſſeſſed with the devil, he commanded them to hold their peace; but when they thought fit to reproach and ſcorn him, he held his peace. And near the end of his life, that he might leave us this vertue by his laſt Will and Teſtament, he confirmed it by that ſo admirable example of waſhing his Diſciples feet, as alſo by undergoing that ſo ignominious death of the Croſſe. Saint Bernard ſaith, *The Son of God abaſed and diminished himſelf, by taking our nature upon him, and he would have his whole life to be a pattern of* Humility, *ſo to teach us by actions, that which he would alſo teach us by words: A ſtrange manner of inſtruction. But why Lord muſt ſo high a Majeſty be abaſed ſo low? To the end that from henceforth there may not ſo much as one man be found, who ſhall once adventure to be proud, and to exalt himſelf upon the earth. It was ever a ſtrange boldneſs, or rather a kind of madneſs, for a man to be proud, but now (ſaith he) when the Majeſty of God hath humbled and abaſed it ſelf, it is an intollerable ſhame, and an unſpeakable kind of abſurdity, that this little wretched worm man, ſhould have a mind to be honoured and eſteemed: That the Son of God, who is equall to the Father, ſhould take the*

form of a ſervant upon him, and vouchſafe to be dishonoured, and abaſed, and that I who am but duſt and aſhes ſhould procure to be valued and admired.

With much reaſon, did the *Saviour* of the world declare that he is the maſter of this vertue of *Humility*, and that we were to learn it of him, for neither *Plato*, nor *Socrates*, nor *Ariſtotle*, did ever teach men this vertue. For when thoſe heathen Philoſophers, were treating of thoſe other vertues of fortitude, of temperance, of wiſdome, and of Iuſtice, they were ſo far off the while from being humble therein, that they pretended even by thoſe very works, and by all their vertuous actions, to be eſteemed, and recommended to poſterity. It is true, that there was a *Diogenes*, and ſome others like him, who profeſſed to contemn the world, and to deſpiſe themſelves, by uſing mean cloaths, and certain other poverties and abſtinencies, but even in this, they were extreamly proud, and procured even by that means, to be obſerved and eſteemed, whilſt others were deſpiſed by them: as was wiſely noted by *Plato* in

in *Diogenes*. For one day, when *Plato* had invited certain Philoſophers, and amongſt them *Diogenes* to his houſe, he had his rooms well furniſhed, and his carpets laid, and ſuch other preparations made, as might be fit for ſuch gueſts. But as ſoon as *Diogenes* entred in, he began to foul thoſe fair carpets with his dirty feet, which *Plato* obſerving, asked him what he meant. *Calco Platonis faſtum*, ſaith *Diogenes*; I am trampling ſaith he, upon *Plato's* pride. But *Plato* made him this good anſwer, *calcas ſed alio faſtu*, thou trampleſt indeed, but with another kind of pride, inſinuating thereby, that the pride wherewith he trod upon *Plato's* carpets, was greater then *Plato's* pride in poſſeſſing them.

The Philoſophers did never reach to that contempt of themſelves, wherein Chriſtian *humility* conſiſts, nay they did not ſo much as know *humility*, even by name, for this is that vertue which was properly, and only taught by *Chriſt* our *Lord*. Saint *Auguſtine* obſerves, how that divine ſermon made by our *Saviour* in the Mount, began with this vertue; *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit*,

for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. For both Saint *Auguſtine*, and others affirm, that by poor in ſpirit, ſuch as be humble are underſtood. So that the *Redeemer* of the world, begins his preaching with *this*, he continues it with *this*, and he ends it with *this*. *This* was he teaching us all his life, and *this* doth he deſire that we ſhould learn of him; He ſaid not (as Saint *Auguſtin* obſerves.) *Learn of me to create heaven and earth, learn of me to do wonderfull things, and to work miracles, to cure the ſick, to caſt out divels, and to revive the dead, but learn of me to be meek & humble of heart.* For better is the humble man who ſerves God, than he who works miracles. That other way is plain and ſafe, but this is full of ſtumbling blocks and danger.

The neceſſity which we have of this vertue of *humility* is ſo great, that without it, a man cannot make one ſtep into ſpirituall life. Saint *Auguſtine* ſaith, *it is neceſſary that all our actions be very well accompanied, and fenced by humility, both in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end thereof*: for if we be negligent never ſo little, and ſuffer vain complacence, and ſelf-

pleaſing

pleaſing to enter in, the wind of pride carries all away. And it will help us little, that the work it ſelf be very good, nay rather in good works, we have moſt cauſe to fear the vice of vain glory, and pride. For other vices have relation to ſins, and wicked objects, as envy, luxurioufneſs, and wrath, which carry a kind of ill ſuperſcription upon them, to the end, that we may take heed thereof; Whereas pride is ever treading as it were, upon the heels of good works, that ſo it may deſtroy them: A man goes proſperouſly ſayling with his heart raiſed up towards heaven, becauſe at the beginning of the action, he had addreſſed it to the glory of God, and behold, when ſuddenly there comes a wind of vanity, and caſts him upon a rock, by procuring to make him deſire to pleaſe men, and to be honoured and eſteemed by them, taking ſome vain contentment therein, and therewith the whole buſineſſe ſinks: And ſo both Saint *Gregory*, and Saint *Bernard* ſay very well. *He who aſſembles any other vertues without humility, is like a man who carries a little duſt or aſhes againſt the wind, in which caſe*

the wind will be ſure to ſcatter, and carry it all away.

CHAP. II.

That Humility *is the foundation of all vertue.*

SAint *Cyprian* ſaith, *Humility is the foundation of holineſſe.* Saint *Hierom* calls *humility the firſt and principall grace of a Chriſtian.* Saint *Bernard* Saith, *Humility is the foundation and preſerver of all other vertues,* they all ſay, that *humility* is the ground and foundation of all holineſſe, vertue, and grace. Saint *Gregory* in one place, calls it the *miſtris, and mother of all vertues;* and he ſaith alſo in another place, *that it is the root, and very off-ſpring of vertue.* This metaphor, and compariſon of the root, is very proper, and doth very well declare the properties and conditions of *humility*: For firſt he ſaith, that as the root ſuſtains and ſupports the flower, and when the root is pluckt up, the flower doth inſtantly dry, & wither, ſo every vertue whaſoever is inſtantly loſt, if it grows not up, & continues not in the root of *humility.* But as the root which

which lyes under ground, & is trampled and trodden upon, hath no beauty or odour in it, and yet the tree receives life from thence, just to the humble man is buried, and disesteemed, and disgraced, and seems to carry no lustre nor brightness in himself, but is cast aside in a corner, & forgotten; and yet this very thing is that, which conserves him, and makes him thrive. But withall, as to the end that the tree may be able to grow, and continue, and bear much fruit, it is necessary that the root lye deep, and how much the more deep it is, and more covered with earth, so much the more fruit will the tree yield, and so much the longer will it continue, according to that of the Prophet *Isay*, *It shall send the root downward, and make the fruit grow upward*; so the fructifying of a soul in all vertue, & the conserving it self therein consists in laying a low root of *humility*. How much the more humble you are, so much the more will you profit & grow in vertue and perfection. To conclude, as pride is the beginning and root of all sin, according to the wise man, so *humility* is the foundation and root of all vertue.

But ſome man will ſay perhaps, how can you affirm that *Humility* is the foundation of all vertue, and of all ſpirituall building, when commonly we are taught by ſpirituall men, that faith is the foundation, according to that of Saint *Paul*, *Other foundation can no man lay, then that is layed, Ieſus Chriſt the righteous*, that is faith in Jeſus Chriſt. To this *Aquinas* anſwers well. *Two things are neceſſary for the well founding of a houſe, firſt it is neceſſary to open the ground well, and caſt out all that which is looſe, till at length you arrive to that which is firm, that ſo you may build afterward upon it, and when this is done*, you begin to lay the firſt ſtone, which with the reſt then laid, is the principal foundation of the building. After this manner ſaith *Aquinas*, do *humility*, *and faith behave themſelves one towards another, in the ſpirituall building of vertue. Humility is that which opens the ſoyle, and the Office thereof is to dig deep into the earth, to caſt out all that which is looſe, which ſignifies the weakneſs of mans power. So that you muſt not lay your foundation upon your own ſtrength; for all this is no better then ſand; all this is to be caſt out; diſtruſting your ſelves;* and

and ſtill you muſt be digging on, till you come to the firm ſtone, and the living rock, which is Chriſt our Lord. This indeed is the principall foundation: but yet notwithſtanding, becauſe for the ſetling of this foundation, there is need alſo of that other, *humility* is alſo called a foundation; And ſo he, who by means of *humility*, will open the ſoil well, and dig deep into the knowledge of himſelf, and caſt out all the ſand of his own eſtimation, and confidence in himſelf, will arrive to that true foundation, which is *Chriſt* our *Lord*, and this man will raiſe a good building, which will not be driven down, though the winds blow, and the waters beat, becauſe it is founded upon the firm rock. But on the other ſide, if he build without *humility*, the building will inſtantly ſink down, becauſe it is founded upon ſand.

They are not true vertues, but apparent only and falſe, which are not founded upon *humility*. And ſo Saint *Auguſtine* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 13. *That in thoſe Romans, and ancient Philoſophers, there was no true vertue, not only becauſe they wanted charity, (which gives life, and being to all vertue,*

and

and without which, there is no true & perfect vertue,) but beſides, becauſe they wanted alſo the foundation of humility: & in their fortitude; temperance, wiſdome, and juſtice, they deſired to be eſteemed, and to be talked of when they were dead; and ſo their vertues were but certain empty things, and without ſubſtance, & indeed they were but ſhadows, and ſhews of vertue. And ſo, as they were not perfect, and true, but only apparent, he ſaith, that God rewardeth the Romans for them with temporall bleſsings of this life, which are alſo bleſsings but of appearance. If therefore you meant to build up true vertue in your ſouls, procure firſt to lay a deep foundation of humility therein. If you deſire (ſaith he) to be truly great, and to erect a high building of vertue in your hearts, you muſt open the ground very low. As much more high as a man means to raiſe this building, ſo much the lower muſt he lay his foundation. For there is no high without low; and after the proportion or rate, that you will dig deep and lay the foundation of *humility* low, ſo much the higher will you be able to raiſe the Tower of Evangelicall perfection, which you have begun. *Aquinas* amongſt other grave ſen-

ſentences, which are remembred to have been his, ſaid thus of *Humility*. *He who goes on with deſire to be honoured, he who flies from being contemned, and if he be, is troubled at it, is far from perfection, though he ſhould work wonders*, for in *fine* his vertue hath no foundation.

CHAP. III.

Wherein it is declared more particularly how humility is the foundation of all vertues, and this is done by diſcourſing of the chief of them.

TO the end, that it may the better be ſeen, how true this ſentence of the Saints is. That *Humility* is the foundation of all the vertues, and how neceſſary this foundation is for them all, we will briefly diſcourſe upon the chief of them. And to begin with the Theologicall vertues, *Humility* is neceſſary towards faith. For faith ſuppoſeth a ſubmiſſe and humble underſtanding, *ſubduing*, (as the Apoſtle Saint *Paul* ſaith,) *our underſtanding to the obedience*

dience of the faith of Christ our Lord. And so a proud understanding gives difficulty and impediment, against the receiving of the faith, and Christ our redeemer declared as much to the Pharises in this manner, *How will you be able to believe, who receive glory from one another, and seek not for that glory, which is of God alone? Ioh.* 5.44. And not only is *humility* necessary for the first receiving of faith, but for the conservation also thereof. And it is generally the Doctrine of the Doctors and Saints, that pride is the beginning of all heresies, when a man esteems his opinion and judgement so much, that he prefers it before the common voice of the Saints, and of the Church, and so he comes to fall upon heresies. And so the Apostle saith, 2. *Tim.* 3. *I give you to understand that in the latter dayes, there will be dangerous times, for men will be great lovers of themselves, covetous, puffed up, and proud,* and he imputes heresies to puffing up, and pride, as St. *Augustine* declares very well.

The vertue also of hope, is conserved, and maintained by *humility*, because the humble man finds, and feels his necessity,

ty, and knows that of himſelf he can do nothing, and ſo he reſorts to God more earneſtly, and places all his hope in him.

Charity alſo and the love of God, is quickened and kindled by *humility*, becauſe the humble man knows, that whatſoever he hath, comes to him from the hand of God, and that himſelf is very far from deſerving it; and by this conſideration he is much inflamed towards the love of God. What is man (ſaid the holy *Iob*,) that thou ſhouldeſt remember him, and ſet thy heart upon him, and vouchſafe him ſo many benefits and favours? I to be ſo wicked towards thee, and thou to be ſo good towards me, I to be ſo earneſt in offending thee day by day, and thou in doing me favours every hour. This is one of the moſt principal motives whereof the Saints have ever been wont to ſerve themſelves, that ſo they might be much inflamed with the love of God. For when they moſt conſidered their own indignity and miſery, they found themſelves moſt obliged to ſerve God, who was pleaſed to place his eyes upon ſo great baſeneſs, (ſo ſaid the

bleſſed

bleſſed Virgin.) *My ſoul doth magnifie our Lord, becauſe he vouchſafed to look upon the baſeneſs of his ſlave, or handmaid.* As for the charity of men towards their neighbours, it is eaſily to be ſeen, how neceſſary *Humility* is. For one of thoſe things which is moſt wont to cool and leſſen our love to our Neighbours, is to judge of their faults, and to hold them to be full of imperfections, and defects. But the *humble* man is very far from this, for his eyes are ever caſt in upon his own errors, and he never conſiders any thing in others but their vertues; and ſo he holds all other men to be good, and himſelf only to be imperfect, and faulty, and unworthy to live amongſt his brethren. And from hence is wont to grow a great eſtimation, reſpect, and love to them all. Beſides, the *humble* man is not troubled that all men ſhould be preferred before him, and that much account is made of them, and ſo himſelf alone is forgotten, or that things of greater moment are recommended to the care of others, and the leaſt and meaneſt to him.

No envy hath any place amongſt hum-

ble

ble men, for envy ſprings from pride, and therefore if there be *Humility*, there will be no envy or contention, or any thing which may weaken a mans love to his neighbours.

From *Humility* alſo grows patience, which is neceſſary to all men in this life. For the humble man acknowledges his faults and ſins, and conſiders himſelf to be worthy of any puniſhment, and no affliction comes to him, which he eſteems to be leſſe than it ſhould have been, in reſpect of his faults, and ſo he holds his peace, and knows not how to complain, but rather ſaith with the Prophet *Micah*, *I will ſuffer willingly that punishment which God shall send me, becauſe I have ſinned againſt Him.* And ſo, as the proud man is ever complaining, and ſtill thinks that men do him wrong, though they do him right, and that they treat him not as he deſerves; ſo the man who is humble, though indeed you doe him wrong, perceives it not, and judges it not to be ſuch, nor doth he imagine that you ever give him any offence, nay rather it ſeems to him, that you let him live at a great eaſe, and how-

howſoever you proceed with him, he is very well ſatisfied, that you treat him better then he deſerves.

Humility is alſo a mighty means towards patience. And therefore the wiſe man adviſing him who means to ſerve Almighty God, to prepare himſelf to ſuffer temptations, and diſguſts, and to arm himſelf with patience, aſſigns him for the means thereof, that he ſhould be humble. Carry thy heart abaſed, and then ſuffer. Receive all that in good part which comes upon thee, though it be very contrary to thy ſenſe and indure it though it put thee to pain. But how ſhall this be done? What kind of armour is that, which you mean to put upon me, to the end that I may not feel affliction; or if I feel it, that I may be able to ſupport it? Poſſeſſe *humility*, and ſo you ſhall have patience.

From *humility* doth alſo ſpring that kind of peace which is ſo much deſired by all, and which is ſo neceſſary for ſuch as are Religious. So ſaith Chriſt our Saviour. *Be meek and humble, and you ſhall poſſeſſe great reſt and peace*, both within your ſelves, and with your brethren.

And

And as amongſt the proud there are ever contentions, and diſputes,& brauls, (ſaith the wiſe man) ſo amongſt ſuch as are *humble*, there can be no contention or ſtrife, except only that holy ſtrife and contention, who may be the inferiour and may give all kind of honour and advantage to his Neighbour. Theſe are good contentions, and ſtrifes, which as they grow from true *humility*, and fraternal charity, ſo they alſo ſtrengthen and conſerve the ſame.

That *Humility* is alſo neceſſary for the preſerving of chaſtity, we have many examples, in the hiſtories of the primitive times, where we read of ugly, and abominable fals of Men, who had already ſpent many of their years in a religious ſolitary, and penitential life, all which proceeded from want of *humility*, and from confiding and preſuming on themſelves; which God is wont to puniſh, by permitting men to fall into thoſe other ſins. *Humility* is alſo ſo great an ornament to chaſtity, that Saint *Bernard* ſaith, *I dare adventure to ſay, that even the virginity of the bleſſed Virgin Mary, would not have been pleaſing to God, without hu-*

humility. Finally for the vertue of obedience, it is a clear truth, that both he cannot be truly obedient, who is not humble, and that he who is humble, muſt needs be obedient. The humble Man may be commanded to do any thing, but ſo may not he, who is not humble. The humble Man frames no contrary judgements, but conforms himſelf in all things to his ſuperior, and not only in the work, but even in the will and underſtanding alſo; nor makes he any contradiction, or reſiſtance.

If now we will come to ſpeak of prayer, upon which the very life of a religious, and ſpirituall man relies, if it be not accompanied with *humility*, it is of no worth; Whereas prayer with *humility* pierces heaven. *The prayer of him who humbles himſelf, doth penetrate heaven*, ſaith the wiſe man; and he will not give over till he obtain all that which he deſires at the hands of God. That holy and humble *Iudith*, being ſhut up in her Oratory, clad with ſackcloath, and covered with aſhes, and proſtrate upon the earth, cries out in theſe words. *The prayer of the humble, and meek of heart was ever pleaſing to*

thee

thee, O Lord. God beheld the prayer of the humble, and deſpiſed not their Petitions. Never think that the humble man ſhall be driven away, or depart out of countenance, he ſhall obtain what he asks, God will hear his prayer. Do but conſider how highly that humble prayer of the Publican in the Goſpel pleaſed God; he who preſumed not ſo much as to lift up his eyes to heaven, but diſpoſing himſelf far of, into a corner of the Temple, and knocking his breſt with humble acknowledgment of himſelf, ſaid; *O Lord have mercy upon me, for I am a grievous ſinner, I tell you of a truth* (ſaith Ieſus Chriſt our redeemer) *that this man went juſtified out of the Temple*, and that proud Phariſee, who held himſelf for a Saint, went condemned. In this very manner might we diſcourſe of the reſt of the vertues, and therefore if you deſire to go the next way, for the getting of them all, and to learn a ſhort and compendious document, for the ſpeedy obtaining of perfection, this is it; *Be humble.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the particular neceſsity which they have of this vertue, who profeſſe to procure the ſalvation of their neighbours ſouls.

BY how much thou art greater, ſee thou humble thy ſelf (ſaith the wiſe man) ſo much the more, and thou ſhalt find grace in the ſight of God. We who make profeſſion to gain ſouls to God, may ſay (for our confuſion) that God hath called us to a very high ſtate; ſince our office is to ſerve the Church, in certain miniſteries, which are very eminent, and high, even the ſame, to which God choſe the Apoſtles; namely, the preaching of the Goſpel, the adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and the diſpenſation of his body and blood, ſo that we may ſay with Saint *Paul*, *God hath given us the miniſtry of reconciliation.* He cals the preaching of the Goſpel, and the diſpenſation of the Sacraments, by which grace is communicated, the miniſtery of reconciliation. God hath made us his ſervants, his Embaſſadours, (as his Apoſtles were the firſt) of that chief Biſhop Ieſus Chriſt

tongue

tongues and inſtruments of the holy Ghoſt. God exhorting, and perſwading men by us. Our *Lord* is pleaſed to ſpeak to ſouls by our tongues, by theſe tongues of fleſh, will our *Lord* move the hearts of men, for this have we therefore more need than others, of the vertue of *Humility*, and that upon two reaſons, firſt, becauſe by how much the more high our Office, & vocation is, ſo much more hazard ſhall we run, and ſo much the greater will be the combate of vanity and pride. *The higheſt hils* (as St. *Hierome* ſaith) *are aſſaulted by the higheſt winds.* We are imployed in very high Miniſteries, and for this are we reſpected and eſteemed over the world. We are held to be *Saints*, and even for other Apoſtles upon earth, and that all our converſation is ſanctity, (ſo by all means it ought to be, and woe unto us if it be not) and that our ſtudy is to make them alſo Saints, with whom we converſe. Here is need of a great foundation of *Humility*, that ſo high a building as this, may not be driven down to the ground. We had need have great ſtrength of vertue, that we may be able to bear the weight

weight of honour, with all the circumſtances thereof. A hard task it is, to walk in the midſt of honours, and that yet no part thereof ſhould faſten it ſelf to the heart. It is not every bodies caſe, to have a head that can be ſafe ſo high. O how many have grown giddy, and fallen down from that high ſtate wherein they were, for want of the foundation of *Humility*? how many who ſeemed Eagles, towring up in the exerciſe of ſeverall vertues, have through pride, become as blind as Bats.

For this do we therefore ſtand in particular need to be very well grounded in this vertue, for if we be not, we ſhall run great hazard of being giddy, and of falling into the ſin of pride; yea and that the greateſt of all others, ſpirituall pride. *Bonaventure declaring this, ſaith; That there are two kinds of pride, one which concerns temporall things, and this is called carnall pride, and another which concerns things ſpirituall, and this is called ſpirituall pride, & ſo ſaith, that this ſecond is a greater pride, and a greater ſin than the former*, The reaſon hereof is clear, for as he ſaith, *the proud man is a thief, and commits robbery, for he runs*

runs away with the goods of another, against the will of the owner; by having ſtollen the honour and glory which is proper to *God*, and which he will not give away, but reſerve to himſelf. My glory I will not give to another (ſaith he by the Prophet *Iſay*) and this doth the proud man ſteal from God, and he runs away with it, and applyes it to himſelf. Now when a man grows proud of any naturall advantage, as of nobility, of agility, and ſtrength of body, of quickneſs, of underſtanding, of learning, or the like, this man is a robber, but yet the theft is not ſo great. For though it be true, that all theſe bleſſings are of God, they are yet but as the chaffe of his houſe; but he who ſhall grow proud of his ſpirituall gifts, as namely of ſanctity, or of the fruit which is gathered by gaining ſouls, this is a great thief, a robber of the honour of God, and who ſteals thoſe jewels which he eſteems the moſt rich, and of the greateſt price, and value, and which indeed were ſet at ſo high a rate, that he thought his own blood and life, well imployed upon the purchaſe thereof. For this reaſon, a certain holy Father

being full of care, and fear leſt he ſhould fall into pride, was wont to ſay thus to *God*. O *Lord*, if thou give me any thing, keep it for me, who dare not truſt my ſelf with it, for I am no better then a thief, and am ſtill running away with thy goods. And now let us alſo walk on with the ſame fear, ſince we have much more reaſon to be afraid, and are far from being ſo humble as he was. Let us not fall into this ſo dangerous pride, let us not run away with thoſe goods of *God*, which he hath put with ſo much confidence into our hands. Let no part thereof ſtick to us, let us attribute nothing to our ſelves, but return the whole back to God. It was not without great miſtery, that Chriſt our Saviour when he appeared to his Diſciples upon the day of his glorious Aſcenſion, reprov'd them firſt for their incredulity, & hardneſſe of heart, & commanded them afterward to go and preach the Goſpel throughout the whole world, and gave them power to work many, and mighty miracles. For he gives us thereby to underſtand, that he who is to be exalted to the doing of great things, hath need

need to be humbled firſt, and to be abaſed in himſelf, and to have a true knowledge of his own faculties, and miſeries, that ſo though afterward he come to great perfection, he may yet remain ſtill intire in the knowledge of himſelf, and ſtick faſt to the underſtanding of his own baſeneſs, without attributing any other thing to himſelf then unworthineſſe. *Theodoret* to this purpoſe notes, that God reſolving to chuſe *Moſes* for their Captain, and conductor of his People, and to work by his means, ſuch wondrous and admirable things, as he reſolved to let the world ſee, thought fit for the cauſe aforeſaid, that firſt, that very hand wherewith he was to divide the Red Sea, and effect other things ſo very ſtrange, being firſt put into his boſome, ſhould be then drawn forth, and ſeen by himſelf to be full of leproſie.

A ſecond reaſon, for which we ſtand in more particular neceſſity of *Humility*, is to the end, that we may gather fruit in thoſe very miniſteries wherein we are imployed, ſo that *Humility* is neceſſary for us, not only in regard of our own improvement,

leſt otherwiſe we ſhould grow vain and proud, and ſo caſt away our ſelves; but beſides, for the gaining of our neighbours, and the bringing forth fruit in their ſouls. One of the moſt principal means towards this end is *Humility*, and that we diſtruſt our ſelves, and that we rely not upon our own induſtry, or prudence, or other parts, but that we place all our confidence in *God*, and aſcribe, and refer all to him, according to that of the wiſe man: *Put your confidence in God with your whole heart, and rely not upon your own prudence.* And the reaſon hereof is (as afterward I ſhall declare more at large) becauſe when through diſtruſt of our ſelves, we place all our confidence in God, we aſcribe it all to him, and put the whole buſines to his accompt, whereby we oblige him much, to take care thereof. O Lord diſpatch thine own buſines, the converſion of ſouls is thine, and not ours, alas, what power can we have to ſave ſouls? But now when we are confident in the means we uſe, and in the diſcourſes which we are able to make, we bring our ſelves to be parties to the buſines, and attribute much

much to our ſelves, and all that we do, we take from Almighty God. They are like two balances, for look how much the one riſes, ſo much the other will be ſure to fall, as much as we attribute to our ſelves, ſo much we take from *God*, and run away with the glory, and honour which is onely his, and thus he comes to permit, that no effect is wrought. And I pray God that this be not ſometimes the cauſe, why we do our Neighbours no more good.

We read of many Preachers in former times, and remember ſome of our own time, who though they were not very learned men, no nor very eloquent, yet by their Preaching, Catechiſing, and private communications in an humble and low way, have converted, quickened, inflamed, and ſtrengthened many of their flock, not in the perſwading words of humane wiſdome, but in the manifeſtation of ſpirit, and truth, as Saint *Paul* ſaith, *They were diſtruſtfull of themſelves, and placed all their confidence in God*, and ſo *God* gave ſtrength, and ſpirit to their words which ſeemed even to dart burning flames into the hearts of their hearers.

rers. And now I know not whether the reaſon why we produce not at this day, ſo great fruit, be not becauſe we ſtick much cloſer to the opinion of our own prudence; & becauſe we reſt, and rely much upon our own means of perſwaſion, and our learning, and diſcourſe, and our polite, and elegant manner of declaring our minds, and we go guſting, and delighting our ſelves much with our ſelves. O well then ſaith God, when you conceive that you have ſaid the beſt thing, & delivered the moſt convincing reaſons, and remain content, and jolly, with conceit that you have done great matters, you ſhall then effect leaſt of all. And that ſhall be fulfilled in you, which the Prophet *Iſay* ſaid, *give them a barren womb, and dry breaſts*; I will take order that thou ſhalt be a barren Mother, & thou ſhalt have no more thereof but the name, I will give you dry breaſts, ſuch as no child ſhall hang upon, nor any thing ſtick by them which thou ſayeſt, for this doth he deſerve, who will needs uſurp the goods of God, and attribute that to himſelf, which is proper, & only due to his *divine Majeſty*, I ſay no, but whatſoever Men ſhal preach, muſt

muſt be very well ſtudied, and conſidered, but yet this is not all, for it muſt alſo be very well wept upon, and very well recommended to God, and when you ſhall have made your head ake with ſtudying it, and ruminating upon it, you muſt ſay, *We have but done what we ought, and we are unprofitable ſervants*, what am I able to effect, I have made a little noiſe of words, like a piece which ſhoots powder without a bullet, but if the heart be wounded, it is thou O Lord who muſt do it. The Kings heart is in Gods hand, and he inclines it to whatſoever he will. It is thou O Lord who art to move, & wound the heart, alas what are we able to do to them? What proportion can our words, & all our humane means carry, to an end ſo high, and ſo ſupernaturall, as it is to convert ſouls? No ſuch matter. But how comes it then to paſſe, that we are ſo vain, & ſo well pleaſed with our ſelves, when we think ſome good is done, & that our buſineſs ſucceeds well, as if we were the men who had done the deed, *ſhall peradventure* (ſaith the Prophet *Iſay* to God) the Hatchet or the ſaw brag againſt

him who uſes it, and works with it, and ſay I am he who have cut, and who have ſawed that wood: This were, as if a cudgel ſhould look big, and admire it ſelf, becauſe a man lifts it up, whereas the thing in it ſelf is but wood, which cannot once ſtir, if men ſtir it not. Now we are juſt thus, in reſpect of any ſpirituall, and ſupernaturall end of the converſion of ſouls. We are like ſo many wands, who cannot once ſtir, if God ſtirs not, and therefore we muſt aſcribé all to him, as having nothing to brag of in our ſelves.

God doth ſo much eſteem, that we rely not upon our own ſtrength, or humane diligence, and that we ſhould take nothing to our ſelves, but aſcribe all to him, and give him the glory of all, that St. *Paul* ſaith, that for this reaſon, Chriſt our Lord would not make choice of eloquent and learned men, for the converſion of the world, by the Preaching of the Goſpel but of poor Fiſhermen, who were ignorant and rude, God made choice of ignorant and groſſe People to confound the wiſe of the world, he choſe the poor and weak to confound the mighty

mighty and ſtrong, he choſe the mean and baſe, who ſeemed to be nothing in the eyes of fleſh and blood, to ſubdue Kings and Emperors, and all the Grandees of the earth. But know you why, ſaith St. *Paul*, to the end, that man may not go bragging in the ſight of God, nor take occaſion of aſcribing any thing to himſelf, but give all the glory of all to God. If the Preachers of the Goſpel were very rich and powerfull, and went with great troops, and ſtrong hand to preach Gods word over the world, they might perhaps impute mens converſion to the force of their arms. If God had choſen the great learned men, and the moſt excellent Orators of the world, who by their learning, and eloquence, might convince the Ppiloſoph rs, a man might have attributed the converſion of mankind to curioſity of ſpeech, and ſubtility of arguments, in diminution of the credit, and reputation of the vertue and power of Chriſt our Lord. But it muſt not be after this manner, ſaith St. *Paul*, God was not pleaſed, that this great buſineſs ſhould be carried by eloquence of ſpeech, or humane wiſdom,

leſt the eſtimation of the power, and efficacy of the croſſe, and paſſion of Chriſt our Lord ſhould ſuffer prejudice thereby, St. *Auguſtine* ſaith, our *Lord Ieſus Chriſt* reſolving to humble the necks of the proud, did not by means of Orators gain Fiſhermen, but by means of Fiſhermen gained both Orators, and Emperors. *Cyprian* was a great Orator, but Saint *Peter* the Fiſherman was before him, by meanes of whom was converted, not only the Orator, but even the Emperor.

The holy Scripture is full of examples, to ſhew that God is wont to chuſe weak means, and inſtruments for the doing of mighty things, to teach us this truth, and to the end, it might remain deeply fixed in our hearts, that we have nothing whereof to glory, or to aſcribe to our ſelves, but abſolutely all to God. This are we alſo taught by that illuſtrious victory of *Iudith*, which ſhe being a weak woman, obtained againſt an Army of above a hundred and forty thouſand men. This are we alſo taught, by that poor little ſhepheard *David*, who being but a boy, and with no other weapon but his ſling, beat down that Giant *Goliah*

Goliah, and triumphed over the Philistines. To the end, that the whole world (saith he) may know that there is a *God* in Israel, and that all men may understand, that God hath no need either of sword, or launce for the obtaining of Victory, (for battels in fine are his, and victory is his) and that men may be sure of this, he gives it when he will, without arms.

This was also the mistery of *Gideon*, who had drawn two and thirty thousand men together against the Midianites, who vvere more then a hundred and thirty thousand men, and God said thus to him, *Gideon* thou hast great store of People vvith thee, but Midian shall not be delivered up into thy hands. Consider vvhat a strange discourse of God this is, thou shalt not overcome, because thou hast much People vvith thee. If he had said thou canst not overcome them because they are so many, and thou hast so fevv, it seems that the discourse had been rationall; but you are deceived, & understand not the business, this had been a good reason for men to alledge, but that other was proper to God alone,

alone, you cannot overcome saith God because you are many, but why so? To the end that Israel may not glorifie itself against me, and so steal the victory from me, and become vain and proud, conceiving that it was conquered by the strength thereof. God carried the matter so, as that there only remained three hundred men with *Gideon*, and commanded that he should then present battel to the Enemy, and with them he gave *Gideon* the victory, yea, and they had not so much as need to put themselves in arms, or to take their sword into their hands, but with the only sound of the Trumpets which they carried in one of their hands, and with the noise of breaking certain pots, and with the brightness of the flaming torches which they carried in the other. God struck the enemy with such a terror & amazement, that they overwhelmed and killed one another, and the rest put themselves to flight, as thinking that the whole world was coming upon them, then the others could not say that they had overcome by their own strength, and this was that which God desired,

name-

namely, that they might be forced to acknowledge him the only giver of victory. If then, even in temporall, & humane things, wherein our own diligences, and means, carry some kind of proportion towards the end, as our arms, and forces do towards the obtaining of victory, God will not yet permit that we attribute any thing to our selves, but that we must ascribe the victory of a battel, and indeed the good successe of all affairs to him, if even in naturall things; neither he who plants, nor he who waters is any thing, and it is not the gardner who can make any plant grow, nor make any tree give fruit, but only God; what shall we say of spiritual and supernatural things, of the conversion of souls, of a mans own profit & increase in vertue, wherein our means, indeavours, and diligences remain so short, and so far behind as that they carry no proportion at all with so high an end? The Apostle Saint *Paul* saith, God only is he who can give increase, and spiritual fruit, God only is he who can strike the hearts of men with amazement, and mighty fear, God only is he who can make men abhor

sin,

ſin, and forſake wickedneſſe of life. And as for us, we can onely make a little noiſe with the trumpet of the Goſpel, and if we ſhall break theſe earthen pots of our bodies with mortification, and if men may be able to ſee the light of a very exemplar life ſhine in us, we ſhall indeed have done our parts, but yet ſtill it is onely God who muſt give us the victory.

Let us gather, and draw two things from hence, that ſo we may exerciſe our functions with much comfort, and with the profit both of our ſelves, and our neighbors,

The firſt is that whereof we have already ſpoken, to diſtruſt our ſelves, to place all our confidence in God, and to attribute the whole fruit and good ſucceſſe of all things to him. S. *Chryſoſtom* ſaith, *Let us not wax proud, but let us confeſſe our ſelves to be unprofitable, that ſo we may grow to be profitable, and uſeful*: and Saint *Ambroſe* ſaith, *if you will produce much fruit amongſt your neighbors*, obſerve the rule which we are taught by the Apoſtle S. *Peter*, He who ſpeaks, let him make account, that God put theſe words in

his mouth, he who works, let him make account that it is God who works by him, and let him give the honour and glory of it all to him. Let us not aſcribe any thing to our ſelves, nor run away with ſtrange conceit, nor take any vain contentment in the act.

The ſecond thing which we are to fetch from hence, is that we be not diſanimated or dejected when we conſider our own wretchednes, and miſery. Of this we have alſo great need, for who obſerving himſelf to be called to ſo high an Office, and to ſo ſupernatural an end, as it is to convert ſouls, to draw them out of ſin, out of hereſies, out of infidelity, who I ſay conſidering this, will not faint under the thought, and ſay, O Jeſus how great a diſproportion is this? Such an imployment fits not well with me, who am the moſt needy & miſerable creature of all others. But yet in this you are deceived, for even for this very reaſon, this enterprize is fit for you, *Moſes* could not believe that he was ever to perform ſo great a work, as to draw the people of Iſrael out of the captivity of Ægypt, and he excuſed himſelf thus to

God

God who was desirous to send him: *What am I that I should go treat with the King, and procure him to let the people of Israel depart out of Egypt? send him O Lord whom you are to send, for as for me I am a stammerer, & unfit for the imployment.* This is that (saith God) which serves my turn, it is not thou shalt do it, I will be with thee, and I will teach thee what thou art to say. The same hapned also to the Prophet *Ieremy*, whom God sent to preach to the world, but he began to excuse himself thus. *A. A. A.* do you not see O Lord, that I can hardly pronounce my words, but am a very child, and how then will you have me undertake so great an enterprise as this? Even for this very reason, he will use thee, and thou art just the man he seeks, and perhaps if thou wert indued with many parts, God would not have chosen thee to this end, but now thou shalt have no colour to steal the praise, and attribute any thing to thy self, & by such weak instruments, is he desirous to do great things.

The holy Evangelists recount that the Apostles coming from preaching and *Christ* our *Lord* observing the fruit which

which they had gathered, and the wonderful things which they had wrought, did highly rejoyce in the Holy Ghoſt, and gave great thanks, and glorified his eternal Father. *I give thee thanks O eternall Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, for that thou haſt hidden theſe things from the wiſe and prudent of the world, and haſt revealed and communicated them to thy little ones, and by their means doſt work ſo great wonders.* Bleſſed and praiſed be thou *O Lord* for ever, becauſe thou haſt been pleaſed to do thus. O happy little ones, happy humble ſouls, for theſe are they whom God exalts, and by whom he works wonders, and whom he takes for his inſtruments in doing great things, in working great converſions, & gathering great fruit of ſouls, therefore let no man be diſcouraged or diſmaid. Be not afraid little flock, be not diſanimated, or put out of heart, becauſe thou ſeeſt thy ſelf very little, and leaſt of all others, for it hath been pleaſing to your heavenly Father, to give you power over the hearts and ſouls of men. *I will be with you* (ſaid Chriſt our Saviour) *I will aſsiſt you unto the end of*

the

the world, let us then hold for certain that Jesus will ever be our succour, as himself promised to our Fathers the blessed Apostles, and that we shall ever have him for our conductor, and Captain, and therefore let us not grow weary, or be discouraged in this so great affair of helping souls, to which God hath called us.

CHAP. V.

Of the first degree of Humility, *which is for a man to think meanly of himself.*

LAurentius Iustinianus saith, *that no man knows well what humility is, but he who hath received the gift of being humble from God.* It is really a very hard thing to be known. A man saith, he deceives himself in nothing more, then in thinking that he knows what true *Humility* is. Do you think it consists in saying, I am a miserable sinful creature, I am proud, *&c.* If it consisted in this, the thing were easie enough, and we should all be humble, for we all say of ourselves, that we are this, and we are that, and I pray God that we may all speak

we think, and that we may not say it with the mouth alone, and by way of complement, do you think that *Humility* consists in wearing poor, and mean cloaths, or in imploying our selves about objects, and comtemptible things? It consists not in this, for herein may be much pride, and as man may desire to be much esteemed, and valued even for this, & to hold himself to be better, and more humble then others, which is the height of pride. True it is, that these exterior things do help toward true *humility*, if they be used as they ought, (whereof I shall say more afterward,) but yet in fine *Humility* doth not consist in this. S. *Hierome* saith, *many follow the apparence, and shadow of Humility, few the truth.* An easie thing it is, to carry the head bowed down, the eyes low, the speech submisse, & soft, to sigh often, and at every word to be calling themselves miserable and sinful creatures, but yet if you touch these very men with any little word, though it be but very lightly, you shall instantly be able to to see how far they are from true *Humility*. Let all feigned words be laid aside,

aſide, away with Hipocriſies, and ex
rior ſhews, for the true humble m
(ſaith he) is ſhewed by his ſufferan
and patience. This is that touch-ſto
whereby true *Humility* is diſcerned.

Saint *Bernard* deſcends more partic
larly to declare, wherein this vert
conſiſts, and gives us this definitio
thereof. *Humility is a vertue, whereby
man moſt truly diſcerning, and obſerving
own defects, and miſeries, holds himſelf
ſmall account.* Humility conſiſts not
exterior things or words, but in the
ry root of the heart, in a mans thinki
moſt baſely of himſelf, and both
holding himſelf, and in deſiring to
held by others, in very mean accou
and ſo as that this muſt riſe out o
moſt profound knowledge of himſelf

To declare, and as it were anatom
this truth, the antient Fathers ſet do
many degrees of *Humility*. *Aquina*
ſigneth twelve degrees of this vert
Saint *Anſelm* ſpeaks of ſeven. *Bona
ture* reduces them to three, and we
now follow this laſt, both for brevi
ſake, and to the end, that reſtrain
this Doctrine to fewer points, we m

the more eaſily keep them before our eyes, and ſo procure to put them in execution. The firſt degree therefore of *Humility* (ſaith *Bonaventure*) is, *that a man think meanly of himſelf*, and have himſelf in ſmall account, and the neceſſary, and onely means to this, is the knowledge of a mans ſelf. Theſe two things be they, which the definition of *Humility*, aſſigned by Saint *Bernard* comprehends, and ſo it onely reaches to the firſt degree. Namely that *Humility* is a vertue, whereby a man holds himſelf in mean account.

This is then the firſt, and this ſaith S^t. *Bernard*, *is wrought in man, by his having a true knowledge of himſelf, and of his miſeries, and defects.* For this cauſe, ſome are wont to put the knowledge of a mans ſelf, for the firſt degree of *Humility*, and they do it with great reaſon. But yet, for as much as we reduce all the degrees to three, with *Bonaventure*, we put for the firſt degree, the holding of a mans ſelf in ſmall account, and we put the knowledge of a mans ſelf, for the neceſſary means whereby to attain this degree of *Humility*, but yet in ſubſtance all

is

is one. We all agree in this, that th
knowledge of a mans ſelf, is the begi
ning, and foundation, whereby *Humi*
ty is to be obtained, and the thinkin
of our ſelves as we deſerve. For how c
we think of a man as he deſerves, if w
knovv him not. This cannot be, it
therefore neceſſary, firſt that vve kno
vvhat any man is, and then vve may
ſteeme, or honour him more or le
according to what we know of him.
that ſtill you muſt firſt know what yo
are, and afterward, according to wh
you are, you may eſteeme your ſelv
and you ſhall have good leave to do
for if you eſteeme your ſelves for wh
you are, you will be very humble,
you will eſteeme your ſelves very litt
but if you eſteem your ſelves more th
you deſerve, that will be pride. S. *Iid*
ſaith, *Superbus dictus eſt, quia ſuper vult*
dere quam eſt. Therefore is a man c
led proud, becauſe he holds himſelf, a
deſires to be held by others, for mo
then he is, and this is one of the reaſo
which ſome aſſigne, why God loves *H*
mility ſo much, becauſe he is a great
ver of truth: and *Humility* is truth, a

pri

pri
not
& w
thin
ſolv
eſtee
thin
deſir
ſelve
you
nable
ſelf fo
not o
dang
ved i
ther,

Of the
root
for

LEt
int
ledge
ſo we
ſure,

pride is a deceit, and a lye, for you are not that which you think of you ſelves, & which you deſire that others ſhould think you to be. If therefore you reſolve to walk in truth, and in *Humility*, eſteem your ſelves for what you are. Me thinks I ask no great matter of you, in deſiring that you will eſteeme your ſelves for what you are, and not for what you are not. For it is a very unreaſonable thing for any man to eſteem himſelf for more then he is. And it would not onely be a great deceit, but a great danger withall, for any man to be deceived in himſelf, eſteeming himſelf for other, then indeed he is.

Chap. VI.

Of the knowledge of a mans ſelf, which is the root, and the neceſſary and onely means for the obtaining of Humility.

LEt us begin to ſound, and dig deep into our ſelves, and into the knowledge of our weakneſs & miſery, that ſo we may diſcover this moſt rich treaſure, (ſaith S. *Hierome*.) In the very dung of

of your baſeneſs, and of your infirmitie and ſins, you ſhall find that precious pearl of *Humility*. Let us begin with our corporall being, and let that be the firſt preſſing of the ſpade, as St. *Bernard* ſaith: *Set theſe things ever before thine eyes, what thou wert, what thou art, and what thou art to be. Have ever before thine eye, what thou waſt before thou wert ingendred, what was a certain thing ſo ſtinking, and ſo filthy as that we may not give it the true name. What art thou now? Thou art a veſſell full of dung: what art thou to be shortly, but the food of worms?* We have here matter enough to meditate upon, and to dig in to. O baſe, and vile condition of humane nature. Look upon the trees, and plants, and thou ſhalt find that they produce beautifull leaves, and flowers and fruits, but man proceeds out of himſelf nits, lice, and worms. The plants and trees yield out of themſelves Oyle, Balſamum, and wine, and odours alſo of much ſweetneſſe, and a man utters a thouſand uncleanneſſes, of ſo abominable ſavour, as makes ones ſtomach turn to think of it, and much more to name it. But in fine, ſuch as the tree is, ſuch

the fruit like to be, for an ill tree can bear no good fruit.

Verily, the Fathers do with much reaſon, and with great propriety, compare the body of man to a dunghil overcaſt with ſnow, which on the outſide appears beautifull, and fair, but within is full of uglines, and uncleanneſſe. The bleſſed St. *Bernard* ſaid, If you put your ſelves to conſider what you vent by your eyes, your ears, your mouth, your noſtrils, and the other ſinks of your body, there is not in the whole world, any other ſo filthy dunghill, nor which utters ſuch abomination as this. O how well ſaid the wholy *Iob*? *What is man but rottenneſs it ſelfe, and a very fountain of worms, I have ſaid to rottenneſſe thou art my Father, and to the worms I have ſaid you are my mother, and my brethren.* Such a thing as this is man, a very running ſtream of rottenneſs, and a wide ſack full of worms, Well then, of what ſhall we now be proud? Of what will duſt, and aſhes take occaſion to brag? At leaſt from hence, we ſhall be able to diſcover no colour for being proud, but enough for being humble, and to deſpiſe our ſelves. And

therefore Saint *Gregory* ſaith, *It will help us to conſerve Humility, if we remember our own deformity*, it will keep very ſafe under theſe aſhes.

Let us paſſe yet a little further on, and dig yet deeper, and preſs the ſpade yet lower into the ground. Conſider what you were before God created you, and you ſhall find that you were juſt nothing, and that you could never have been delivered out of that dark depth of being nothing, if God through his great mercy and goodneſs, had not taken you out from thence, and placed you amongſt his creatures, giving you that real, and true being, which you now enjoy. So that, for as much as is on our parts, we are nothing, and we are to hold our ſelves but equall to those things which are not, and we muſt aſcribe to God, that advantage which now we have above them. This is that which Saint *Paul* ſaith, *If any man think he is any thing, he is deceived, for of himſelf he is nothing*: We have here diſcovered a great deep mine, whereby to enrich our ſelves with *Humility*. Yea, and there is yet more in this, for even now after

we are created, and have received our being, it is not we who hold it, and can contain it in our ſelves. It is not, as when the architect hath built an houſe, which ſuſtains it ſelf when he hath left it, without needing him any more who made it. It is not ſo in our caſe, but now after we are created, we have ſtill as great need of God, in every moment of our lives, to the end that we may not looſe the being which we have already, as we had, whilſt we were nothing, that we might grow to be. He is ever ſuſtaining, and holding us up, with his hand of power, that ſo we may not again fall down, into that profound pit of being nothing, out of which he took us before. And ſo ſaith *David: Thou O Lord didſt frame me, & thou didſt place thy hand upon me, and this hand of thine O Lord, holds me ſtill faſt on foot, and conſerves me, that ſo I may not again return to my former nothing.* We are ever ſo depending, and ſo hanging upon this hand-faſt of God, that if once this ſhould fail us, and that he ſhould take off that hand, but for any one moment of our lives, in the ſame very moment we are diſpatched,

and we ſhould looſe our being, and ſo return to our nothing, as when the Sun is once hidden, the earth is dark.

For this reaſon ſaith the holy Scripture. *All Nations in the ſight of God, are as if they were not, and as nothing, and they are meer emptines it ſelf before him*: This is that which we all are ſaying every minute, namely, that we are nothing, but yet I doubt that we ſay it only with our mouths, for I know not whether we underſtand what we ſay. O that we underſtood and felt it, as the Prophet underſtood, and felt it, when he ſaid thus to *God, I O Lord am as nothing in thy ſight*: Really, for my part I am nothing, for I had no being, and the being which now I have, was not had by me of my ſelf, but thou O *Lord* didſt give it me, and to thee muſt I aſcribe it all, and I have nothing whereof to brag, or glory in my ſelf, for I had nothing at all to do therein; and thou O Lord art ever conſerving me in being, and holding me ſtill faſt on foot, and thou art ſtill giving me ſtrength wherewith to work, all being, all ſtrength, all power to work, come to us from thy hand, for on our part we

we can do nothing, and we are worth nothing, and in fine, are nothing, ſo that now of what ſhall we be able to wax proud? Will it be perhaps of the nothing which we ſee, we have? We ſaid a while ago, of what doſt thou grow proud, O thou who art but duſt and aſhes, but now we may ſay of what doſt thou grow proud, O thou who art nothing, which is leſs then duſt and aſhes? What occaſion, or even colour can a thing of nothing take, for looking big, and growing proud, and holding it ſelf in ſome account? Infallibly none at all.

CHAP. VII.

Of a moſt principal means for a mans knowing himſelf, and obteining Humility, which is the conſideration of his ſins.

LEt us yet go farther on, and dig, and ſound deeper in the knowledge of our ſelves. Let us uſe the ſpade once again. But what is there any thing yet deeper, doth any thing lye lower then

nothing? yes there doth, and much lower. What, the ſin which you have added to it, O what a deep pit is this? it is much deeper then nothing, for ſinning is much worſe then not being, and it were better for a man not to be, then to have ſinned, and ſo ſaid *Chriſt* our *Lord* of *Iudas*, who meant to ſell him, it had been better for him that he had not been born. There is not a place ſo low, ſo diſtant, and ſo deſpiſed in the eyes of God, amongſt all thoſe things which either are, or are not, as that man who lives in ſin, without repentance; he is diſinherited of Heaven, the enemy of God, and ſentenced for all eternity to Hell fire, and though now, through the goodneſs of our *Lord*, your conſciences are not charged with the allowance of any known ſin; yet as for the knowledge of our nothing, ye called to mind that time, wherein we had no being, for the knowing of our baſeneſs, and miſery, we are now to call that time to mind, when we were in ſin. Conſider in how wretched eſtate you were, when in the ſight of God you were ungracious, ugly, his enemies, the children of

wrath

wrath, obnoxious to eternal torments, and then deſpiſe your ſelves throughly, and abaſe your ſelves into the loweſt & profoundeſt place that poſſibly you can, for you may ſafely believe, that how much ſoever you humble, and deſpiſe your ſelves, you will never be able to arrive to that depth of contempt, which he deſerves, who hath offended that infinite goodneſs which is God. This buſines hath no bottome at all, it is a moſt profound, and infinite depth, for till we ſhall be able to ſee in heaven, how good God is, we ſhall never be able to know perfectly, how great an ill ſin is, which is committed againſt God, and how great puniſhment he deſerves who commits it.

O that we would continue in this meditation and dig on, and ſtill ſound deeper into this mine of our ſins, and miſeries, how humble would we then be; in how ſmall account would we hold our ſelves; and how eaſily would we admit to be diſ-eſteemed and contemned by all. He who hath been a traytor to God, what contempt will

he not endure for his love? He who gave God away for a fancy or toy, or for ſome pleaſure of an inſtant: he who offended his Creator, and his *Lord*, and deſerved to remain for ever in hell; what diſhonors, what affronts, or injuries will not he be glad to receive, and accept them as gentle chaſtiſements for thoſe offences, which he hath committed againſt the majeſtie of God; as ſaid the Prophet *David*. *Before that ſcourge came wherewith God humbled and afflicted me, I had given him cauſe to inflict it; I had already ſinned, and therefore now I am ſilent, nor dare I complain, for all is much leſs than my ſins deſerved. Thou haſt not punished me, O Lord, according to my offences*, for whatſoever we are poſſibly able to ſuffer in this life, is meerly nothing in compariſon of that which any one of all our ſins, hath deſerved, Will you perhaps conceive, that he deſerves not to be diſhonored, and deſpiſed, who hath diſhonored, and deſpiſed God? do you not think it to be reaſon, that he be lightly eſteemed, who ſet light by God? Will you not confeſs, that that will, which durſt of-

fend

fend the Creator of the world, ſhould never from thence forward, do any one thing which it pretends, or deſires, in puniſhment of ſo vaſt a preſumption.

It ſerves alſo for a ſpur towards good works, and to keep a man from being negligent; and to make him walk on with fear and *humility*, in the ſight of God; begging pardon and mercie of him, as we are adviſed to do by the wiſe man. *Bleſſed is that man, who alwaies fears.* And be not without fear, even concerning thoſe ſins, of which you have repented. This conſideration of our ſins, is a very efficatious means to make us put little value upon our ſelves, and to be ever humble, and to live, as it were, even under ground; for there is much to be gotten and digged up from thence.]

If beſides we would ſtay, and conſider the defects and wounds, which original ſin hath cauſed in us, how copious would that matter be which we might find therein, for our humiliation? How is our nature perverted and corrupted by ſin! For as a ſtone is inclined by the natural weight thereof, to

fall downward; juſt ſo by the corrup-
tion of original ſin, we have a moſt
active inclination to love honor, and
profit, and ſatisfaction of our ſenſe; and
we are extreamly awake towards all
thoſe temporal things, which concern
us; but ſtark dead, towards thoſe others
which are ſpiritual and divine. That
commands in us, which in all reaſon
were to obey; and that obeys, which
ſhould command. And to conclude,
under the out ſide, and poſture of men
the appetites of beaſts ly concealed;
and we have hearts which grow grov-
ling towards the ground; the heart
of man is wicked, and inſcrutable;
and who can arrive to the malice there-
of? The deeper you dig into this well,
the greater abominations will you diſ-
cover therein, as was ſhewed in that fi-
gure to *Ezekiel*.

And if now we will apply our ſelves
to conſider our preſent defects, we
ſhall finde our ſelves very full of them;
for theſe grow ever out of our own
ſtore. How ſlippery are our tongues,
and how ill guarded are our hearts!
How inconſtant are we in our good
purpoſes;

purpoſes, and how earneſt for our own intereſt and contents? How deſirous are we to fulfill our appetites? How full are we of ſelf-love? How ſtrong in the abetting of our own judgment and will? How lively do we ſtill find our paſſions? how intire our bad inclinations? and how eaſily do we permit our ſelves to be tranſported by them. St. *Gregory* ſaith very well, upon thoſe words of *Iob*, *Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?* *Iob* 13.25. that a man is, with much reaſon, compared to the leaf of a tree. For as a leaf is turned, and toſt with every wind, ſo is man by the wind both of his paſſions and temptations. Sometimes he is troubled with anger: ſometimes he is diſſolved with vain mirth; ſometimes he is tranſported by the appetite of avarice, ſometimes of ambition, and ſometimes of luſt, ſometimes he is hoyſed up by pride, and ſometimes caſt down by inordinate fear. And ſo ſaid the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *As the leaves of trees are ſhaken, and carried away by the wind, ſo are we aſſaulted and ſubdued by temptations.* We have no hability, or ſtrength in virtue, nor

in:

in executing our good purpoſes, but indeed we have enough, for which we may humble and confound our ſelves, and that not onely by the conſideration of our miſeries, and ſins, but by the weighing alſo of thoſe works, which ſeem in our eyes to be very good. For if we will conſider, and examine them well, we ſhall find occaſion and matter enough, for which to humble our ſelves, by reaſon of the faults and imperfections, which commonly we mingle with them; according to that of the ſame *Prophet*; *We are become as one unclean; and all our juſtice is like ſome filthy and polluted rag.* But of this we have ſpoken elſe where, & ſo there will be no need to inlarge our ſelves now herein.

CHAP. VIII.

How we are to exerciſe our ſelves in the knowledge of what we are, that ſo we may not be dejected or diſmaid.

OUr miſery is ſo great, and we have ſo much reaſon to humble our ſelves, and we have ſo hourly experience there-

thereof: that we ſeem to ſtand in more need of being animated & incouraged, to the end that we be not dejected and diſmayed, conſidering our ſelves to be ſo full of imperfections and faults, then to be exhorted to the conſideration thereof. And this is ſo very true, that holy writers, and inſtructors of men in the way of holineſs, teach us; that we muſt dig, and ſound into the knowledge of our miſeries, and frailties, in ſuch ſort, as we ſtop not there, for fear leſt the ſoul ſhould ſink down by diſtruſt into deſpair, in regard we ſee ſo great miſery in our ſelves, and ſo great inconſtancy in our good purpoſes, but that we muſt then paſſe on, towards the knowledge of the goodneſs of God, and place our whole confidence in him: that ſo the ſorrow of having ſinned, may not, as Saint *Paul* ſaith, be ſo great, as to cauſe dejection, and deſpair, leſt perhaps *ſuch a one ſhould be ſwallowed up with overmuch ſorrow*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. But it is to be a well tempered ſorrow, and mingled with the hope of pardon, caſting our eyes upon the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and not fixing them wholly upon the only

only conſideration of our ſins, and the deformity, and grievouſneſs thereof; and ſo they ſay, that we muſt not dwell upon the conſideration of our own poverty, and weakneſs, leſt ſo we be diſmayed, but onely that we may thereby find reaſon to diſtruſt our ſelves, obſerving that on our part, we have no leaning place on which to reſt, and then inſtantly to look up to God, and truſt in him, and thus we ſhall not only not remain diſcouraged, but we ſhall rather be animated, and revived thereby, becauſe that which ſerves to make us diſtruſt when we behold our ſelves, will ſerve to ſtrengthen our hope when we look up to God: and the more we know our own weakneſs, and the more we be diſtruſtfull of our ſelves by looking up to God, and relying on him, and by placing all our confidence in him, we ſhall find our ſelves the more ſtrong, and full of courage in all things.

But the *Fathers* do here advertiſe us of a point which imports very much, namely, that as we muſt not dwell upon the knowledge of our infirmities, and mi-

miſeries, leſt we fall upon diſtruſt, and diſpair, but paſs on to the knowledge of the goodneſſe, the mercy, and liberality of God in Chriſt, and place our whole confidence in him: ſo alſo muſt we dwell as little here, but turn our eyes quickly in again upon our ſelves, and upon our own miſeries, and frailties. For if we ſtick upon the knowledge of the goodneſſe, the mercy, and liberality of God, and forget what we are in our ſelves, we ſhall run much hazard of preſumption, and pride, and we ſhall grow to be too ſecure of our ſelves, and to be overbold, and not ſo humble, and carefull as were fit, which is a dangerous courſe, and hath been the foundation, and root of many fearfull, and great ruins; O how many men, who were very ſpirituall, and who ſeemed to be exalted, as high as Heaven in the exerciſe of prayer, and contemplation, have caſt themſelves down headlong by this precipice? O how many who ſeemed to be Saints, have come by this means, to have moſt wretched falls? Becauſe they forgot themſelves; becauſe they

they made themſelves too ſure, through the favours which they had received from God ? They grew to be full of confidence, as if there had already been no more danger for them, and ſo they came miſerably to deſtruction.

We have books which are full of ſuch accidents. Saint *Baſil* ſaith, that the cauſe of that miſerable fall of *King David*, both into adultery, and murther, was the preſumption which once he had, when he was viſited by the hand of God, with abundance of conſolation, ſo far as that he preſumed to ſay, *I ſhall never be moved, or altered from this ſtate. Pſal.* 30. Well, ſtay a while, God will a little take off his hand: thoſe extraordinary favours, and graces ſhall ceaſe, and you ſhall ſee what will happen. *Thou turnedſt away thy face from me, and I was troubled.* God leaves you in your poverty, and then you will be like your ſelf; and you ſhall know to your coſt, when you are once fallen, that which you would not know whilſt you were viſited, and favoured by Almighty God. And Saint *Baſil* alſo ſaith, that the cauſe of the fall, and denial of the Apoſtle Saint *Peter*, was the confiding

fiding, and presuming vainly in himself. Because he said with arrogancy, and presumption, *that though all men should be scandalized, yet would not he be scandalized, but would rather dye with Christ*; For this did God permit, that he should fall; that so he might be humbled, and know himself. We must never give way that our eyes may wander from our selves, nor ever be secure in this life: but considering what we are, we must go ever on, with great care of our selves, and with great care, and fear, lest the enemy whom we carry still about us, put some trick upon us, and provide some snare, into which he may procure us to fall.

So that as we must not stay upon the knowledge of our own misery, and weakness, but passe instantly on to the knowledge of the goodness of God, so neither must we stay upon the knowledge of God, and his mercies, and favours, but return with speed again, to cast our eyes down upon our selves. This is that *Iacobs* ladder, whereof one end is fastened to the earth, in our knowledge of our selves, and the other reaches

reaches up to the very height of Heaven. By this ladder muſt you aſcend, and deſcend, as the Angels aſcended, and deſcended by that other. Riſe up by the knowledge of the goodneſſe of God, but ſtay not there, leſt you grow into preſumption, but deſcend to the knowledge of your ſelves: yet ſtay not alſo there, leſt you fall into deſpair; but ſtill return again to the knowledge of God, that ſo you may have confidence in him. In fine, the buſineſs conſiſts, in that you be ſtill aſcending, and deſcending by this ladder.

We read of a certain devout Woman that did uſe this exerciſe, to free herſelf from ſeverall temptations which the Devil brought againſt her, as ſhe herſelf related, when the Devil would tempt her by way of confuſion, deſiring to make her believe that her whole life was nothing but ſin, error, and abuſe, then ſhe would raiſe her ſelf up, but yet ſtill with *Humility*, by the conſideration of the mercies of God: and ſhe would be ſaying to this effect, I confeſſe; *O my Creator*, that my whole life hath been led in darkneſſe, but yet I will

will hide my ſelf in the wounds of Chriſt Jeſus crucified, and I will bath my ſelf in his blood: and ſo my wickedneſſe ſhall be conſumed, and I will rejoice in my Creator, and my Lord, *Thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter then ſnow.* And ſo alſo, when the Devil would offer to put her up to pride, by temptations of a contrary kind, ſeeking to make her think that ſhe was perfect, and pleaſing to God, and that there was no cauſe why ſhe ſhould any longer afflict her ſelf, and lament her ſins, then would ſhe humble her ſelf, and make the Devil this anſwer, *O wretched creature that I am.* Saint John Baptiſt was ſanctified in his mothers womb, and yet notwithſtanding all that was continually exerciſed about repentance. And I have committed ſo many defects, and have never lamented them, no nor even conſidered them as they deſerved. With this the Devil not liking to endure ſo great *Humility* on the one ſide, nor ſo great confidence in the other, (as we may imagine) ſaid thus to her, Be thou accurſed, and he alſo who hath taught thee this, for I know not how

to

to make entrance here, ſince if I abo
thee by confuſion, thou raiſeſt thy ſe
up as high as Heaven, by the conſider
tion of the mercy of God: and if
raiſe thee up towards preſumption, tho
abaſeſt thy ſelf by the conſideration
thy ſins, as low as Hell by way of *Hum*
lity.

Now after this very manner, are
to uſe this exerciſe, and ſo ſhall we
the one ſide, be full of circumſpectio
and fear, and on the other, full of co
rage, and joy. Fearfull in regard of o
ſelves, and joyfull through our hope
God. Theſe are thoſe two leſſons, whi
God gives daily to his elect, the one
make them ſee their defects, and the
ther to make them ſee the goodneſs
God, who takes them from us with
much love.

CHAP. IX.

*Of the great beneſit, and profit, which grow
by this exerciſe, of a mans knowing hi
ſelf.*

TO the end that we may yet b
more animated to this exerciſe
th

the knowledge of our ſelves, we will go on declaring ſome great benefits, and advantages which are conteined therein. One of the chief thereof, hath been ſhewed already, namely, that this is the foundation, and root of *Humility*, and the neceſſary means both for the purchaſe, and preſervation thereof. One of thoſe ancient Fathers being asked how a man might do to obtain true *Humility*, made this anſwer. If he conſider only his own ſins, ſounding, and digging deep into the knowledge of himſelf, this man ſhall obtain true humility. This alone were ſufficient to make us attend much to this exerciſe, ſince it imports us ſo very much towards the obtaining of this vertue. But yet we may paſs further on, and ſay, that the humble knowledge of our ſelves, is a more certain way towards the knowledge of God, then the profound ſtudy of all ſciences. And the reaſon which Saint *Bernard* gives is, that this is the moſt high ſcience of all others, and of the greateſt benefit. For from hence a man comes to the knowledge of God, which is given us to be underſtood, as *Bonaventure*

venture saith, by the mistery of that
the holy Gospel which Christ our
viour wrought, upon the person of
man who was born blind. For by
ing dust upon his eyes, he gave
both corporal sight wherewith to
himself, and spiritual sight also, wh
with to know, and adore God. So to
who are born blind through the ig
rance both of God, and of our selv
God giveth sight by laying dirt up
our eyes whereof we were made, to
end, that considering our selves who
but as a little dirt, we may receive
sight whereby first we may see,
know our selves, and from thence
arrive to know God. And the mo
any man knows his own baseness,
shall the more discern the greatne
and Majesty of God. For one cont
ry, and one extream put by the oth
will make that other appear the mo
White layed upon black, appears
more fresh and clear. And so since
is the most extream baseneſſe, and G
the most high excellency, they are
contrary extremes; and from hence
is, that the more a man knows himse

in whom he finds, that there is no goodneſſe at all, but onely nothing, and ſin, the more he finds the goodneſſe, and mercy, & liberality of God, who vouchſafes to love us, and as it were, to converſe with ſo great a baſeneſs as ours is.

From hence grows the ſoul to be greatly kindled, and inflamed towards the love of God, for it never gives over marvelling, and giving thanks to God, for that man being ſo miſerable, and ſo wicked, God endures him upon the earth, and daily alſo doth him many favours. For it happens often, that we cannot ſo much as endure our ſelves, and that yet the goodneſs, and mercy of God towards us is ſuch, as that not onely he endures us, but he is pleaſed to ſay of us: *My delight is to be with the Sons of men.* What didſt thou find O Lord in the ſons of men, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, my delights are to converſe with them.

For this did the Saints ſo much frequent the exerciſe of the knowledge of themſelves, that ſo they might acquire a greater knowledge of God, and

a greater love to his divine Majesty. This was that exercise, and prayer, which Saint *Augustine* used. *O my God, who art ever the same, and never changest; let me know my self, and let me know thee.* And this was the prayer of another, where he spent whole dayes, and nights; *Who art thou O Lord, and who am I.* By this way came the Saints to a very high knowledge of God, and this is a very plain and certain way: and the more you dig down into the knowledge of your selves, the higher shall you rise, and the more shall you grow in the knowledge of God, and of his infinite mercy, and goodness. As also on the other side, the higher you rise, and the more you grow in the knowledge of God, the lower you will descend, and the more you will profit in the knowledge of your selves. For the light which comes to you from Heaven, will shew you such slutting corners in your souls, as will make you ashamed of that which, in the eyes of the world, will seem very fair, and good. *Bonaventure* saith, that as when the sun beams enter into any room, every mote of the air will shew it self. So the sun being

being illuſtrated by the knowledge of God, and by the beams of that true ſun of juſtice, the very leaſt things will inſtantly be ſeen, and ſo the ſoul comes to hold that for faulty, which he who enjoyes not ſo great light, will eſteem to be good.

This is the reaſon why all holy men are ſo humble, and hold themſelves in ſo ſmall account, and the more holy, and perfect they are, they are the more humble, and the account wherein they hold themſelves, is ſo much the leſs. For ſtill, as they have more light, and greater knowledge of God, they know themſelves better, and ſee that of their own ſtock, they cannot brag, but onely of nothing, and of ſin. And how much ſoever they know themſelves, and how many faults ſoever they ſee in their own ſouls, they ſtill believe, that there are many more which they ſee not, and conceive that the leaſt part thereof, is that which they can come to know, and after this rate do they eſteem themſelves. For as they believe that God is more good then they are able to comprehend, ſo alſo do they believe, that themſelves are more wicked then they can underſtand. And as, how much ſoever we conceive, or know

of God, we cannot perfectly comprehend of him, but ſtill there will be more, and much more to be conceived and known: ſo how much ſoever we know our ſelves and how much ſoever we humble, and deſpiſe our ſelves, we ſhall never be able to deſcend ſo low, as to arrive to the depth of our miſery. And this is no aggravation, but a clear truth. For ſince man has nothing of his own ſtore, but nothing, and ſin, who will ever be able to humble and abaſe himſelf ſo much, as thoſe two titles deſerve.

We read of a devout Woman who deſired light of God to know her ſelf, and diſcerned ſo much deformity, and miſery in her condition, that ſhe was not able to endure it, and then ſhe prayed thus to God. *O Lord not ſo much, for I ſhall fall under the burden.* And of another, who begged of God many times that he would make him ſee, and know himſelf. God opened his eyes a little, and it had like to have coſt him dear. For he ſaw himſelf ſo ugly, and ſo abominable, that he uttered loud cries, and ſaid: *O Lord I beſeech thee, even for thy mercies ſake, to take this ſpectacle from before mine eyes,*

I can look no longer upon this figure.

From hence grows alſo, that holy kind of hate, and deteſtation of themſelves, in the ſervants of God, whereof I ſpake before. For how much more they know the immenſe goodneſs of God, and love him more, ſo much the more do they abhor themſelves, as having been oppoſites, and enemies of God, according to that of *Job*. *Why haſt thou ſet me as a mark againſt thee, ſo that I am a burden to my ſelf*, *Job* 7. 20. They ſee that in themſelves they have the root of all miſchief, which is the wicked, and perverſe inclination of our fleſh; and upon this knowledge, they raiſe themſelves up againſt themſelves, and abhor themſelves. Do you not think it reaſon to abhor him, who made you forſake, and ſell ſo great a good as God is, for a little vain contentment, or carnal delight? Do you not think it reaſon for you to hate him, who made you loſe eternal glory, and deſerve Hell for ever; him who wrought you ſo much hurt, and ſtill perſiſts in doing it, do you not think that you have cauſe to deteſt? Well now, this perſon is your ſelf, an oppoſite, and enemy of God, an oppoſite and enemy of your own ſalvation.

CHAP. X.

That the knowledge of ones ſelf, doth not cauſe diſmay, but rather gives courage and ſtrength.

THere is another great benefit, which grows from the exerciſe of knowing a mans ſelf; that not only it cauſes no diſmay, or baſe fear, as perhaps ſome might doubt, but rather a great heart and courage, towards all thoſe things which are good. And the reaſon of this is, that when a man knows himſelf, he ſees that there is no colour why he ſhould rely upon himſelf, but that diſtruſting himſelf, he may put all his confidence in God, in whom he finds himſelf ſtrong and able for all things. Hence it is, that theſe are the men who are apt to attempt, and undertake great things, and theſe are they who go through with them. For in regard they aſcribe all to God, and nothing to themſelves, God takes the buſineſs in hand, and makes it his, and holds it upon his own account, and then he is wont to do mighty things

and even wonders, by the means of weak inſtruments. To ſhew the riches, and treaſures of his mercies, God will do wonderful things, by inſtruments who are miſerable and weak. He uſes to put the treaſures of his mercy into the pooreſt veſſels, for thus doth his glory ſhine moſt. This is that which God ſaid to St. *Paul*, when being even tired with temptations, he cryed out, and begged, that he might be delivered from them; and God made him this anſwer, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee*, how great ſoever thy temptations and miſeries may be, and then doth the power of God prove it ſelf to be more ſtrong, and perfect, when the weakneſs, and infirmity is more apparent. For as the Phyſitian gains more honour, when the ſicknes which he cures is more dangerous, ſo when there is more weakneſs in us, our delivery brings more glory to Gods arm and power; and ſo doth Saint *Auguſtine*, and Saint *Ambroſe*, expound this place. So that when a man knows and diſtruſts himſelf, and puts all his confidence in God, then doth his Majeſty come and help; and when on the other ſide, a man puts confidence in himſelf, and in his own diligences, and means,

he is forſaken by Almighty God. This ſaith Saint *Baſil*, is the cauſe why when we deſire to make our prayers beſt, and to have moſt devotion in certain principal times and occaſions, it falls out many times, that we have leſs; becauſe we put our confidence in our own means, and in our own diligence, and preparations. And at other times, we are prevented with great benedictions and ſweetneſs, when we look for them leaſt, to the end, that we may know, that this is an effect of the grace and mercy of our Lord, and of no diligence or merit of ours. So that a man knowing his miſery and frailty, cauſes no cowardiſe or diſmay, but rather gives courage and ſtrength, in regard that it makes him diſtruſt himſelf, and place all his confidence in God. And this is alſo that which the Apoſtle ſaith, *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. That is, *when I am humbled, then I am exalted*. For thus do both Saint *Auguſtine* and Saint *Ambroſe* declare it. When I humble and abaſe my ſelf, and know that I am good for nothing, then am I exalted and raiſed up. Whilſt I know, and ſee my infirmity and miſery, faſtning my ſelf upon God, I find

my ſelf more ſtrong, and more full of courage, for he is all my confidence and ſtrength.

Hereby you may underſtand, that it is not *Humility*, nor any thing which ſprings from thence, when there come to us ſometimes certain diſmays and dejections, concerning our little progreſs in grace, and when we fear that we ſhall never obtain ſuch or ſuch a vertue, and never overcome ſuch an ill condition or inclination; or that we ſhall not be fit for this or that office, and miniſtery in which we are or may be imployed. This may ſeem to be *Humility*, but many times it is not ſo, but rather ſprings from pride. For ſuch a one caſts his eyes upon himſelf, as if by his own ſtrength and diligence, he were to go through with that buſineſs; whereas he ought to caſt them upon God, in whom we are to be full of confidence and courage, and ſay, *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation, whom then ſhall I fear? the Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom then ſhall I be afraid? If whole armies ſhall riſe againſt me, my heart ſhall not be afraid. If they ſhall bid me battel, yet will I hope in God.* Pſal. 27. *Though I walk in*

the midſt of the very ſhadow of death, and arrive even at the very gates of hell, yet my heart ſhall not fear, becauſe thou O Lord art with me, Pſ. 23. with what variety of words, doth the holy Prophet expreſs the ſelf ſame thing, and indeed we have the Pſalms full of this, to ſignifie the abundance of pious affections, and of the confidence which he had, and which we ought to have in God. *In my God, I will paſs over a wall*, how high ſoever it may be. Nothing ſhall be able to put it ſelf between me and home. God can conquer Gyants, by graſhoppers. *In my God, I will tread lions and dragons under my feet.* By the grace and favour of our Lord, we ſhall be ſtrong. He *teacheth my hands to fight, and mine arms ſhall break even a bow of ſteel.*

CHAP. XI.

Of other great benefits and advantages, which grow by the exerciſe of a man's knowledge of himſelf.

ONe of the principal means, which, for our parts, we are able to imploy, to the

the end that our Lord may ſhew us favour, and communicate great graces and gifts to us is, that we humble our ſelves, and know our own frailty and miſery. And ſo ſaid the Apoſtle St. *Paul, I will gladly glory in my infirmities and weakneſſes*, that ſo the power of Chriſt may dwell in me. And St. *Ambroſe* upon thoſe words, *I am pleaſed in my infirmities*, ſaith, *If a Chriſtian be to glory, it is to be in his own poverty, and miſery, whereby he may increaſe and proſper, in the ſight of God.* St. *Auguſtine* brings that of the Prophet, to this purpoſe. *Thou O God ſenteſt a gracious rain upon thine inheritance: and refreſhedſt it when it was weary.* When think you, that God will give the voluntary and ſweet rain of his gifts and graces to his inheritance, which is the ſoul of man? When the ſame ſoul ſhall underſtand her own infirmity and miſery, then will he perfect it, and the voluntary and ſweet ſhower of his gifts and graces ſhall fall down upon it. And as here amongſt us, the more our poor beggars diſcover their wretchedneſs, and their ſores, to rich and charitable men, the more they move them to pitty, and the more alms they re-

ceive at their hands, ſo the more a man knows, and humbles himſelf, and confeſſes his miſery, the more doth he invite and incline the mercy of God, to take pitty, and compaſſion on him, and to communicate the gifts of his grace with the more abundance. For he gives ſtrength to the weak, and to them who are, as if they were not, but he multiplies courage and ſtrength.

To declare in few words, the great benefits and advantages of this exerciſe, I ſay that the true knowledge of a mans ſelf, is the univerſal remedie of all inconveniences. And ſo in the queſtions which we uſe to ask in ſpiritual conferences, whence ſuch or ſuch a thing uſes to grow, and what may be the remedie thereof, we may in effect anſwer in them all, that they proceed from want of a mans knowing himſelf, and that the remedie thereof would be to know, and humble himſelf as he ought. For if you ask whence it grows that I judge of my Brethren, I ſay from the want of knowing my ſelf. For if I would diligently watch over my ſelf, and duly examine mine own heart, I ſhould find ſo much for me to do, and ſo many miſeries to bewail, that I would not mark the faults of others. If you ask from

whence

whence it comes, that ſometimes I ſpeak ſharp, and unmortified words to my Brethren, that alſo grows from the want of knowing my ſelf. For if I knew my ſelf well, and held my ſelf for the worſt of the company, and looked upon every other man as if he were my ſuperiour, I ſhould not be ſo bold, as to uſe ſuch language to them. If you ask from whence grow thoſe excuſes, and thoſe complaints, and thoſe murmurings, as why they do not give me this or that, or why they treat me in ſuch a faſhion; it is cleer that it riſes from the ſame root. If you ask from whence it comes, that a man is ſo much troubled, and dejected, when he finds himſelf moleſted by variety of temptations, or grows melancholy, and is diſcouraged, when he falls often into any defect; this alſo grows from want of a mans knowing himſelf. For if you were truly humble, and conſidered well the malice of your hearts, you would not be troubled or diſmaid at this, but your would rather be in wonder, that you commit no worſe things, how you came not to have more dangerous faults, and you would be giving great thanks and praiſe to God, for holding you ſo faſt in his hand, that

ſo

ſo you fall not into thoſe things, into which infallibly you would have fallen, if he had not held you up. For from a very ſource and ſink of vice, what ſin is that which would not flow? From ſuch a filthy dunghil what ſhould we expect, but an odious and abominable ſtink, and from ſuch a tree, ſuch fruit, upon thoſe words of the Prophet. *He remembreth that we are but duſt.* Saint *Anſelme* ſaith, what wonder is it, if duſt be blown away by wind. If alſo you deſire a means whereby you may come to ſhew much charity towards your Brethren, and that you may be obedient and patient, and very penitent, you may here find the remedy of all.

CHAP. XII.

How much it concerneth us to be exerciſed in the knowledge of our ſelves.

IT will appear by what is ſaid, how much it concerns us to be exerciſed in the knowledge of our ſelves. *Thales Maleſius* one of the ſeven wiſe men of *Greece*, being asked which of all natural things, was

the hardeſt to be known, made this anſwer, *A mans ſelf*. Becauſe the love which a man bears himſelf, is ſo great, that it diſtracts and hinders this knowledge, and from hence grew that ſaying, which was ſo much celebrated amongſt the antients. *Noſce te ipſum*, know thy ſelf. And another ſaid, *Tecum habita*, dwell with thy ſelf. But let us leave theſe ſtrangers, and come home to others of our own communion, who are better maſters of this ſcience. The bleſſed Saint *Auguſtine*, and Saint *Bernard* ſay, that the ſcience of a mans knowing himſelf, is the moſt profitable and moſt high that ever was invented or found. Men, ſaith Saint *Auguſtine*, are wont to eſteem much the knowledge of the Heavens, and of the earth by Aſtrology and Coſmography, and to know the motions of the skie, and the courſe of the planets; with their proprieties, and influences; but yet the knowledge of a mans ſelf, is the moſt high and profitable ſcience of them all. Other ſciences blow a man, and puffe him up, as Saint *Paul* ſaith; but we are humbled and edified by this. And ſo the fathers, and all ſpiritual conductors, do greatly charge us, to employ our ſelves

in

in prayer, upon this exercise: and they reprove the error of some, who passe too lightly over the consideration of their own defects; and detain themselves in thinking upon other devout things, because they find consolation in them, but none in consideration of their defects and faults, because they take no pleasure in looking into themselves; and in this they are like such as are deformed, who because they are so, dare not look upon themselves in a glass.

Saint *Bernard* speaking to Man, in the person of God, saith thus. O man, if thou didst see and know thy self, thou wouldest be displeasing to thy self, and thou wouldest be pleasing to me: but now because thou doest not see and know thy self, and thou art pleasing to thy self, art displeasing to me. Take heed that there come not once a time, when thou shalt neither be pleasing to God, nor to thy self; not to God, because thou hast sinned; nor to thy self, because thou art damned by thy self, through thine own fault.

Saint *Gregory* treating of this, saith, there are some, who as soon as they begin to serve God, and to take vertue a little into their consideration, think presently, that

that they are holy and good; and do ſo place their eyes upon the good they do, that they forget their miſeries and ſins paſt, yea and ſometime, their preſent ſins too; for they are ſo very buſie about gazing upon the good they do, that they attend not, nay and ſee not, the ill which ſometimes they commit. But ſuch as indeed are good, and the elect of God, proceed after a very different manner. For whereas indeed they are full of vertue and good works, they are yet ever looking upon the ill they do, and are conſidering and ruminating upon their imperfections and defects. And we ſhall quickly ſee what becomes of both theſe kinds of men. For they who are moſt conſidering their ſins, ſecure their good deeds, and conſerve the great vertues which they poſſeſs, remaining ever in *Humility*; and on the contrary ſide, thoſe others, who are looking ſo earneſtly upon their good deeds, loſe them, becauſe they grow vain and proud thereof. So that good men ſerve themſelves of their very ſins, and draw good and ſpiritual profit from thence, whereas ill men draw hurt and loſs, even from their good deeds, becauſe they make ill uſe thereof. As it happens in the caſe

of

of corporal food, which though in it ſelf it be healthful and good, yet if a man eat of it without rule or meaſure, it will make him ſick. And ſo on the other ſide, if the very poiſon of vipers be taken with a certain compoſition and proportion, it will become a treacle, and give him health. When therefore they ſhall bring the good things which you have done to your memory, to the end, that you may eſteem and value your ſelf. Saint *Gregory* adviſes you, to oppoſe your ill deeds againſt them, and to call your former ſins to mind. So did Saint *Paul*, to the end, that his great virtues might not blow him up, as alſo his having been rapt into the third Heaven, and made capable of thoſe high revelations, which were imparted to him. *Alas ſaith he, I have been a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor of the ſervants of God, and of the name of Chriſt; alas I am not worthy to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe I have perſecuted the Church of God.* This is a very good counterpoiſe, and a very good countermine, againſt this temptation.

Upon thoſe words, which the Archangel *Gabriel* ſpake to the Prophet *Daniel*, *O ſon of man obſerve, what I intend to ſay*

to

to thee. St. *Jerom* ſaith, that thoſe holy Prophets, *Daniel*, *Ezekiel* and *Zacharias*, through the high and continual revelations, which they had, ſeemed already, as it were, to converſe amongſt the Quires of Angels, and to the end that they might not exalt themſelves above themſelves, and grow idle headed and proud, upon that occaſion, as conceiving that they were grown to be of a kind of Superior and Angelical nature, the Angel lets them know on the part of God, that they muſt remember their humane nature and frailty; and he calls them ſons of men, that ſo they might underſtand themſelves to be frail men, and miſerable creatures like the reſt; and that ſo they might be humble, and eſteem themſelves but as they were. And we have many examples in hiſtories both Eccleſiaſtical and prophane, both of Saints and other illuſtrious perſons, Kings, Emperors, and Prelates, who uſed this means; and ever kept ſome about them, who might bring them to remembrance from time to time, that they were but men; ſo to conſerve them in *humility*, and to keep them from growing vain and proud.

It is recounted of *Franciſcus Borgia*, that

that whilſt he was yet Duke of Candi
an holy man gave him this counſel, that
he had a mind to profit much in the ſe
vice of God, no day might paſs, wherei
he would not think ſeriouſly of ſomewha
which might put him to confuſion, and
mean opinion of himſelf. And he to
this counſel ſo much to heart, that fro
the time that he uſed the exerciſe of men
tal prayer, he imployed every day, t
two firſt hours thereof, upon this know
ledge and contempt of himſelf. And be
ſides, whatſoever he heard, and read, an
ſaw, it all ſerved him towards this abaſi
and confuſion. Let us therefore obſer
this counſel, and practiſe it. Let no on
day paſs, wherein we ſpend not ſome tim
of prayer, and conſider not ſomewha
which may tend to our confuſion and co
tempt: and let us not grow weary, n
give over this exerciſe, till we find that o
ſoul hath even drunk up a profound an
cordial deſire to be diſeſteemed and d
ſpiſed: and till we may feel our ſelves
be greatly aſhamed, to appear with
much baſeneſs and miſery as ours is, b
fore the high preſence and majeſty of A
mighty God.

We have very much need of all this, for our pride and inclination to be honoured and esteemed, is so great, that if we walk not continually in this exercise, we shall find our selves every hour to be lifted up above our selves, as cork swimming upon the water, for no cork is so light and vain as we. We must ever be repressing and beating down that swelling and pride which heaves us up, and we must look towards the feet of our deformity and baseness, that so the wheel of our vanity and pride may be broken in pieces. Let us remember the parable of the Fig-tree, which is mentioned in the holy Gospel, and which the owner thereof hath a mind to pluck up by the roots; because in three years it had born no fruit; but the gardener moved that it might be suffered to grow a year longer, and said that he would dig about it, and that if then, it gave no fruit, it might afterwards be rooted up. Dig you in like manner, about the dry and barren Fig-tree of your souls, and let the dung and miseries of your sins be cast round about it, since you have such store thereof, and so you shall be also fertile and bear fruit.

To the end, that we may be the more animated to uſe this exerciſe, and that no man take occaſion to give it over through any vain apprehenſions. We are to underſtand two things. The firſt, that no man muſt think this exerciſe belongs only to beginners, becauſe it alſo concerns Proficients, and moſt perfect men; ſince we ſee that they, and even St. *Paul* himſelf did uſe it. In the ſecond place, it is fit for us to underſtand, that this exerciſe is no afflictive, or melancholy kind of thing, nor cauſes trouble or diſquiet, but rather brings with it great peace and reſt, yea, and great contentment and joy, for any man to conſider and know himſelf, how many defects or faults ſoever he commit, and how perfectly ſoever he underſtand, that becauſe he is ſo wicked, he deſerves that all men ſhould deſpiſe and hate him. For when this knowledge of our ſelves grows from true *Humility*, that pain comes accompanied with ſuch a kind of ſwavity and contentment, that a man would be ſorry to be without it. Other pains and troubles which ſome feel, when they conſider their faults and imperfections are temptations of the divel, who on the

the one ſide, procures by this means, to make us think that we are truly humble; and on the other, would be content to make us diſtruſt the goodneſs of God, and to be diſheartned and diſmayed in his ſervice. Indeed if we were ſtill to pauſe upon the knowledge of our own miſery and weakneſs, we ſhould have occaſion enough to be afflicted and ſad, yea and to be diſcouraged and diſmayed, but we muſt not ſtay there, but paſs on to the conſideration of the goodneſs, and mercy, and liberality of God, and how much he loves us, and what he ſuffered for us, and in this are we to place all our hope. And ſo, that which would be an occaſion of diſmay and ſorrow, by looking upon our ſelves, ſerves to animate and incourage us, and is an occaſion of greater comfort and joy, when we lift up our eyes towards God. A man beholds himſelf, and ſees nothing but cauſe of grief, but looking up to God, he confides in his goodneſs without fear of being forſaken, notwithſtanding the many faults, and imperfections, and miſeries which he diſcerns in himſelf. For the goodneſs and mercy of God, upon which he hath placed his eyes and his heart, doth

in

infinitely exceed and out-ſtrip all that which can be ill in us. And with this conſideration, being rooted in the very ſtrings of the heart, a man unties himſelf from himſelf, as from ſome broken reed, and ever goes reſting upon God, & confiding in him, according to that of the Prophet *Daniel*. Not confiding in our own ſelves, nor in any merit or good work of ours, do we preſume to lift up our eyes to thee O Lord, and to beg favour at thy hands, but by putting our confidence in thy great mercy.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the ſecond degree of Humility, and here it is declared, wherein this degree conſiſts.

THe ſecond degree of *Humility*, ſaith *Bonaventure*, is when a man deſires to be held by others in ſmall account. Deſires to be unknown and diſeſteemed, & that no body may have you in account. If we were well grounded in the firſt degree of *Humility*, we ſhould already have made moſt of our way towards the ſecond. If real-

really we eſteemed our ſelves little, it would not ſeem very hard to us, that others ſhould alſo eſteem little of us; yea and we would be glad thereof. Will you ſee that this is true, ſaith he? All men are naturally glad, when others conform themſelves to our opinion, and think the ſame that we think. Well then, if this be ſo, why are we not glad, when others have us in ſmall account? Do you not know why? Becauſe we eſteem highly of our ſelves, and we are not of their opinion. *Bonaventure* upon theſe words of *Job*, (as they are read according to the vulgar Latine) *I have ſinned, and tranſgreſſed truly: and I have not received as I was worthy*; *chap.* 33. 27. ſaith, many with their tongues ſpeak ill of themſelves and ſay that they are this, and that, but they believe not what they ſay, for when others ſay the ſame, yea, and leſs then that, they cannot indure it. And theſe men when they ſpeak ill of themſelves, ſay it not with truth, nor do they feel it ſo in their hearts, as *Job* did when he ſaid: I have ſinned, and really tranſgreſſed, and offended God, and he hath not puniſhed me, according to my great demerit. *Job* ſaid this with truth of heart,

but

but theſe men, ſaith Saint *Gregory* do humble themſelves only in apparence, and with the tongue. Whereas in their heart they have no *Humility*. They will needs ſeem to be humble, whereas they have no mind to be ſo indeed: for if in earneſt they deſired it, they would not be offended ſo much, when they were reprehended, and admoniſhed of any fault by others, and they would not excuſe themſelves, nor be troubled ſo much as we ſee they are.

Caſſianus recounts, that a certain religious man came once to viſit the devout *Father Serapion*, who in habit, geſture, and words, ſeemed to be of great *humility* and contempt of himſelf, and never made an end of ſpeaking ill of himſelf, and of ſaying that he was ſo great a ſinner, and ſo wicked a man, that he was not worthy to breath in the common air, nor to tread upon the earth, and much leſs would he conſent that they ſhould waſh his feet, or do him any ſervice. Wiſe *Serapion*, after he had dined, began to treat of ſome ſpiritual things, as he had been accuſtomed, and applied alſo ſome little thing to his gueſt, and gave him this good advice with great mildneſs and love; Namely, that

ſinc
be
with
the
up a
youn
admo
poſſib
dentl
rapio
you h
ſelf, a
affron
admon
tains n
ther m
ſo muc
could
haps, by
of your
wiſe ma
juſt and
ſelf? D
praiſe yo
faith Sai
his, Tha
y our
ilitie?

since he was young and strong, he should be careful to keep at home, and labour with his hands for his food, according to the rule of Saint *Paul*, and not to go idly up and down to the houses of others. The young man was so much troubled at this admonition and advise, that he could not possibly dissemble it, but shewed it evidently by his countenance. Then said *Serapion*, what is this my son, that till now you have been speaking so much ill of your self, and so many things of dishonour and affront to you; and that now, upon an admonition, so easie as this which contains no injury, or affront at all, but rather much love and charity, you have been so much offended and altered, that you could not hide it? Did you hope perhaps, by means of that ill which you said of your self, to hear that sentence of the wise man out of my mouth. This man is just and humble, since he speaks ill of himself? Did you pretend that we should praise you, and hold you for a Saint. Ah, saith Saint *Gregory*, how many times is this, That very thing to which we pretend by our hypocrisies to counterfeit *Humilitie*? But that which would fain seem

humility is great pride. For we humble our ſelves many times, to the end that we may be praiſed by men, and beheld for humble and good. And if you will not grant me this, I muſt ask you why you ſay that of your ſelf, which you will not have others to believe? If you ſpeak it from your heart, and if you walk in the way of truth, you muſt deſire that others may believe it too, and may hold you for ſuch as you ſaid; and if you deſire not this, you ſhew plainly that you pretend not thereby to be humbled, but to be valued and eſteemed. This is that, which the wiſe man ſaith: There are ſome who humble themſelves after a counterfeit manner, and their heart is full of deceit and pride. For what greater deceit can there be, then by means of *humility*, to be honoured and eſteemed by men; and what greater pride, then to pretend to be held humble? To pretend to the praiſe of *humility*, is not (ſaith S. *Bernard*) the vertue of *humility*, but the perverſion and ſubverſion thereof. For what greater perverſion can there be then this? What thing can be more unreaſonable, then to deſire to ſeem to be the better for that, for which you ſeem worſe? What

thing

things more unworthy and abſurd, then to deſire to ſeem good, and to be held for ſuch, even for the ill which you have ſaid of your ſelf. Saint *Ambroſe* reprehending this, ſaith thus. Many have the appearence of *humility*, but yet they have not the vertue of *humility*, many ſeem exteriorly to ſeek it, but interiorly they contradict it.

This pride and inclination of ours, to be eſteemed and valued, is ſo great, that we ſeek a thouſand inventions and wayes how to compaſs it. Sometimes we do it directly, and ſometimes indirectly; but we are ever procuring to bring the water to this mill. Saint *Gregory* ſaith, that it is the property of proud men, when they conceive themſelves to have ſaid or done any thing well, to deſire ſuch as ſaw or heard it, to tell them the faults thereof; their intention yet being to be praiſed. They ſeem indeed to humble themſelves exteriorly, becauſe they deſire men to tell them their faults, but this is no *humility*, but pride, for their deſign thereby is to be praiſed. At other times you ſhall have a man ſpeak ill of ſomewhat which he hath done, and declare that he is not pleaſed with it,

that ſo he may come to know what the other thinks, and he would fain hear it excuſed, and that the other ſhould ſay, no certainly it was very well ſaid or done; and you have no reaſon at all to be diſquieted with your ſelf, upon that occaſion.

This I ſay, is that which he ſought. A certain grave *Father*, who was a very ſpiritual man, who was wont to call this a a pride, *By hook or by crook*; becauſe by this deviſe or engine, one man fetches praiſe out of the mouth of another. A man makes an end of his Sermon, and is very content and ſatisfied with himſelf, and intreats another to tell him his faults: But to what end ſerve theſe hypocriſies and fictions: for you believe not that there were any faults, nor pretend any other thing, but that he ſhould praiſe your Sermon, and that he ſhould jump with your own opinion; and that is indeed the thing which you are glad to hear; For if by accident, he tell you plainly of any fault, you are not pleaſed, but rather you will defend it, and ſometimes it happens, that you will judge him who told you of it; as not having ſo good an underſtanding, and note in things of that nature, becauſe he

he held that for a fault, which you conceive to have been well said. All this is pride and desire of praise, which you pretend to satisfie, by this counterfeit *humility*. At other times, when we are not able to conceal the fault, we confess it very clearly to the end, that since we have lost a point of honour by making the fault, we may recover it again by confessing it after an humble manner. At other times, saith *Bonaventure*, we exaggerate our own faults, and say more then is true, to the end, that others seeing that it is neither possible nor credible to have been so much as was said, they may think that there was no fault committed at all, that so they may cast the accusation upon the account of our *humility*; So that by exaggerating and declaring more then is true, we would conceal the fault which in truth is that which we intend. By a thousand devises and tricks, we do procure to hide and disguise our pride, under the cloak of *humility*.

And thus, by the way you shall see, as St. *Bernard* saith, how pretious a thing *humility*, and how base and hateful pride is. See now sublime and glorious a thing

humility is, ſince even pride deſires to ſerve it ſelf thereof, and to be cloathed therewith, and ſee alſo how baſe and ſhameful a thing pride is, ſince it dares not ſo much as appear with the face diſcovered; but overſhadowed and diſguiſed by the vail of *humility*. For you would be extreamly aſhamed, and hold your ſelves for greatly affronted, if the other ſhould underſtand that you pretend and deſire to be eſteemed and praiſed: and therefore it is, that you procure to cover your pride, with the appearence of *humility*. But now, why will you indeed be that which you are ſo aſhamed to ſeem to be. If you would be ſo out of countenance, that others ſhould know you deſire to be eſteemed and praiſed, why are you not much more aſhamed to deſire it. For the defect and ill thereof, conſiſts in the act it ſelf, of your deſiring it, and not in their knowing that you deſire it. And if you be aſhamed that men ſhould know it; why are you not aſhamed that it ſhould be ſeen and known by Almighty God. Thine eyes, *O Lord*, ſee how imperfect I am. All this comes upon us, for not being well rooted in the firſt degree of *humility*, which keeps us far from the ſe-

ſecond. We muſt undertake this buſineſs from the firſt grounds thereof; for firſt it is neceſſary for us to underſtand our own miſery, and our nothing, and from this kind of profound knowledge of our ſelves, to have a baſe conceit of us, and a deſpiſing and contemning of what we are, which is the firſt degree of *humility:* and from thence we muſt get up to the ſecond. So that it ſuffices not that you ſpeak ill of your ſelf, yea even though you ſpeak it ſincerely, and from your heart, but you muſt procure to arrive ſo far, as that you may be glad, that others think that of you, which you think and know of your ſelf; and that they diſeſteem, and deſpiſe you. Saint *John Clamicus* ſaith, he is no humble man who is content to abaſe, and ſpeak ill of himſelf, (for what man is he, who cannot be content to bear with himſelf) but that man is humble, who can eaſily be glad to be ill intreated and deſpiſed by others. It is well, that a man ſhould ever be ſpeaking ill of himſelf, and confeſſing that he is proud, and ſlothful, and impatient, and the like; but it were better that he kept his patience, till he were told as much by others. If you deſire that others may think

of you, and hold you in no other eſtimation, or account then this, and that you are truly glad thereof, when the occaſion is offered, this indeed is true *Humility*.

CHAP. XIV.

Of ſome degrees and ſteps, whereby a man may riſe to the perfection of this ſecond degree of Humility.

IN regard that this ſecond degree of *humility* is the moſt practical and difficult part of the exerciſe of this vertue, we will divide it, as ſome have done before us, and we will ſet forth four degrees or ſteps thereof, that ſo by little and little, and as it were by meaſured paces, we may riſe up to that perfection of *humility*, which this ſecond degree exacts. The firſt ſtep is, not to deſire to be honoured nor eſteemed by men, but rather to fly from all that, which hath any touch of honour and eſtimation. Our books are full of the examples of Saints, who were ſo very far from deſiring to be eſteemed or honoured by the world,

as

as that they fled from honours and dignities, and from all those occasions which might bring estimation with them in the sight of men, as from the most capital enemy which they could have. Christ our *Redeemer*, and our Master, gave us the first example of this, when he fled upon his notice that they meant to chose him for their King, after that illustrious miracle of having fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; when yet himself ran no hazard in any state of life, how high soever it might be, but only to give us example. And for the self same reason, when he was pleased to manifest the glory of his most sacred body to his three Disciples, in his admirable transfiguration, he commanded them not to speak of it to any, till after his death and glorious resurrection: and giving sight to those blind men, and working of other miracles, he commanded them to be silent. And all this was done to give us an example of flying from honour, and the estimation of men, in regard of our great dangers to grow vain, and so to perish thereby.

Gerson brings that to this purpose, which the Poets fain of the Gyant *Am-*

theus, ſon of the earth: Who fighting with *Hercules*, recovered new ſtrength every time that he was caſt down to the ground, and ſo he could not be overcome but *Hercules* obſerving this, lifted him up on high, and ſo cut off his head. This ſaith *Gerſon*, doth the devil pretend to do with us. He ſeeks to hoiſe us up with honour, eſtimation and praiſe, that ſo he may cut our throats, and then caſt us down more low then we roſe high. And therefore the true humble man caſts himſelf down to the earth, in the knowledge of himſelf, and fears and flies from being puffed up and praiſed.

The ſecond degree, as Saint *Anſelm* ſaith, is this, To ſuffer with patience whenſoever any occaſion is offered, whereby you may ſeem to be diſparaged or deſpiſed, and to bear it well. We do not ſay in this place, that you ſhould deſire injuries and affronts, and that you ſhould go in ſearch thereof, and rejoyce therein when you find them. That point is more high and perfect, and hereafter we ſhall treat thereof, but that which now we ſay is that when any thing ſhall preſent it ſelf, which may ſeem to point at your diſ-

ad-

advantage, you bear it at leaſt with patience, if you cannot do it with joy. According to that of the Wiſe man. All that which offers it ſelf, contrary to your ſenſuality and deſire, receive it in good part, though it trouble you, and ſuffer it with *humility*, and patience. This is a great means, both for the obtaing of *humility*, and preſerving it. For as honour, and the eſtimation of men, is a means to make us proud, and vain, and therefore did the Saints fly ſo far from it, ſo all that which tends to our diſeſtimation and contempt, is a very great means both for the getting of *humility*, and growing in it.

Laurentius Juſtinianus was wont to ſay, that *humility* is like a ſtream or brook, which in winter carries much water, and little in ſummer. And ſo *humility* grows leſs in proſperity, and greater in adverſity.

Many are the occaſions, and they are offered us daily, for the exerciſe of *humility*, if we would uſe attention and care in profiting thereby. As thus, That which pleaſes others ſhall be effected, that which contents thee ſhall not be done, that which others ſay ſhall be eſteemed, that which thou

thou ſaiſt, ſhall ſtand for nothing. Others ſhall ask and receive, thou ſhalt beg, and ſhalt not obtain; others ſhall be great in the mouths of men, and ſhall make no account of thee: great affairs ſhall be communicated to others, and thou ſhalt be held unfit for them. Let every man take account of himſelf, and go diſcourſing of thoſe particular occaſions, which may or uſe to offer themſelves, and obſerve how he proceeds therein. Obſerve how you like it, when another commands you reſolutely, and after an imperious manner. Obſerve how you take it, when they admoniſh you, or reprove you for any fault. Obſerve what you think, when you conceive that your ſuperiour deals not confidently, but looks upon you with a kind of wary or jealous eye. Saint *Dorotheus* adviſes, that whenſoever any of theſe occaſions is offered us, to receive it as a remedy and medicine, wherewith to cure and heal our pride; and to pray God for him who miniſters the occaſion, as for the Phyſitian of our ſouls, and to be fully perſwaded, that whoſoever abhors theſe things abhors *humility*.

The third ſtep which we are to mount,

is, that we rejoyce not, and take no contentment when men do esteem and praise us. This is more hard then the last step, as Saint *Augustine* saith. Though it be an easie thing to want praise when it is not given; yet for a man to be glad to be esteemed and praised, and not to take contentment therein, when it is offered, is very hard. Saint *Gregory* handles this point very well upon those words of *Job*. *If I saw the sun when it shined, and when the moon went brightly on, and if my heart rejoyced in secret*: he saith that *Job* spake thus, because he did not joy, or take vain contentment in the praises and estimation of men. For this is to behold the sun when it shines, and the moon when it is bright, for a man to consider the praise, opinion, and fame, which he hath amongst men, and takes delight, and gust therein. He saith therefore, that there is this difference between the humble, and the proud, that the proud rejoyce when they are praised, though it be not true which is said of them, and they rejoyce because they ke-p no account at all, concerning that which indeed they are in themselves, and in the sight of God, but they only pretend to be

valued,

valued, and esteemed by men: and so they joy, and even look big with it, as men who have attained to the end which they aspire. But now the true humble man of heart, when he finds that they esteem and praise and speak well of him, then shrinks he up, and is the more confounded in himself, according to that of the Prophet. *When they exalted me, then did I humble my self the more, and walked on with the more confusion, and fear.* And that with reason. For he fears left he should be the more punished by Almighty God, for wanting that for which he was praised, or if perhaps he want it not, yet he fears left these praises should prove to his whole reward; and that so they will come and say to him, Thou hast already received the reward of thy good works.

So that, whereas proud men take occasion to look big, and grow vain upon the praises of men, from thence do such as are humble, take occasion to abase and confound themselves so much the more. And this saith Saint *Gregory*, is that which the wise man affirms; As silver is tryed in the melter, and gold in the furnace, so is a man tryed by the mouth of him, by whom he is praised.

Go

Gold and ſilver if it be not right, is conſumed by the fire, but if it be good, it is purified, and clariſied thereby. Juſt ſo, ſaith the wiſe man, is a man proved by praiſe. For when a man is eſteemed, and praiſed, if he exalt himſelf and grow vain through thoſe praiſes, his gold and his ſilver is not good, becauſe the furnace of the tongue conſumes it. But he, who hearing his praiſes, takes occaſion from thence to be the more confounded and humbled, is moſt perfect ſilver, and gold, becauſe that fire of praiſe did not conſume it: but rather it remained more purified, and perfected thereby, ſince the man was more confounded and humbled.

Take you therefore this for a ſigne, whether you profit in the vertue of *humility*, or no, ſince the Holy Ghoſt delivers it for ſuch. Conſider whether you be ſorry when they eſteem and praiſe you, or rather whether you be not content, and glad. We read of *Franciſcus de Borgia*, that no one thing troubled him ſo much, as when he found himſelf to be honoured for a Saint, and ſervant of God. And being asked once, why he afflicted himſelf ſo much for this, (himſelf not deſiring it,

nor

nor procuring it) he made anſwer, that he feared the account which he was to give to God: When he found himſelf to be ſo far another man, from that which he was conceived to be, which is that which we ſaid before of Saint *Gregory*. After this manner are we to be very deeply grounded in the knowledge of our ſelves, that ſo the wind of praiſe, and eſtimation of men, may not blow us up, and draw us out of our nothing. But we muſt rather be the more aſhamed thereof, and confounded thereby, conſidering how falſe thoſe praiſes are, and that we have no ſuch vertue in us, as may deſerve them; and that we be not ſuch as the world conceives and publiſhes, and as indeed we ought to be.

CHAP. XV.

Of the fourth ſtep, which is to deſire to be diſeſteemed, and deſpiſed, and to be glad thereof.

THe fourth ſtep for arriving to the perfection of *humility*, is for a man to deſire to be deſpiſed, and diſeſteemed, and be

be glad of dishonours and contempt. St. *Bernard* saith, The man who is truly humble, desireth to be held by others in small account, and not to be accounted humble, but unworthy, and mean, and to be glad thereof. This is the perfection of the second degree of *humility*. And for this reason, *humility* is compared to Nard, which is a small and odoriferous hearb, according to that of the Canticles. *My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.* Cant. 1. 12. For then doth the Odour of this Nard of *humility* extend and impart it self to others, when not only you put little esteem upon your self, but when you also desire, and like well that you be despised and disesteemed by others. S. *Bernard* notes that there are two kinds of *humility*. One is when a man considering himself, and perceiving his misery and baseness, is convinced by the truth, and holds himself in no esteem, and resolves that he is worthy to be despised, and dishonoured by all men. He saith, that the former *humility*, namely, that of the understanding, was not in Christ our Lord; for it was not possible for him to think that he deserved to be held in mean account,

and.

and much leſſe to be diſhonoured, and de-
ſpiſed. Becauſe he underſtood himſelf
perfectly well; and knew that he was true
God, and equall to his Father: But the
ſecond kind of *humility* was in him, name-
ly, that of the heart, and will. For in re-
gard of the great love which he bare us, he
was pleaſed to abuſe, and diſauthorize
himſelf, and to ſeem vile, and contempti-
ble in the eyes of men. And he ſaith,
*Learn of me, for I am meek, and humble
of heart.* But as for us, we are to have
both theſe *humilities*; becauſe the firſt
without the ſecond is deceitfull and falſe.
To deſire to ſeem, and to be held for other
then that which really you are, is falſhood
and deceit. He who really is humble,
and indeed thinks baſely, and diſeſteems
and deſpiſes himſelf, is alſo to be glad that
others may deſpiſe and diſeſteem him.
This is that which we are to learn of *Chriſt*
our *Lord*. Conſider how cordially, and
with how ardent deſire and will, he em-
braced diſhonour and contempt for love of
us. For he was not ſatisfied with abaſing
and emptying himſelf, by making himſelf
man, and taking the form of a ſervant up-
on him, he who was and is the *Lord* of
Heaven

Heaven and earth; but he would needs assume the form and habit of a ſinner. As ſaith the Apoſtle, *God ſent his Son in the habit, and ſimilitude of a ſinfull man.* He took not ſin, becauſe ſin could not be in him, but he took the mark and ſign of ſinners, for he would be circumciſed as a ſinner, & baptized amongſt Publicans and ſinners, as if he had been one of them, and would be leſſe eſteemed then *Barrabas*, and judged to be a worſe man and more unworthy of life then he. To conclude, the deſire which he had to ſuffer affronts, and ſcorns, and reproach, for love of us, was ſo very great, that he thought the hour to ſtay very long, wherein, all inebriated and ſick with love, he might remain naked like another *Noah*, to be ſcorned by men. With baptiſm (ſaith he) am I to be baptiſed, (which was a baptiſm of bloud) and how am I in pain, till I may be able to put it in execution; with deſire have I deſired that the hour may once arrive, wherein there ſhall be nothing for me but buffets and ſpurns, as to any ſlave. For he knew that they would ſpit upon his face as a blaſphemer; and cloath him with white as a fool, and with purple as a

counter-

counterfeit King, and above all, that th
would load him with ſcourges, which w
the puniſhment of malefactors and murde
ing theeves; and finally with the torme
of the Croſſe, in the company of murd
rers; which then was the moſt ignomini
and reproachfull manner of death th
could be found in the world. This is th
which Chriſt our *Redeemer* deſired w
ſo great deſire. As ſaith the Prophet
his name; I was expecting reproach, a
affronts, as one would expect ſomew
which were very pleaſing to him, and w
to give him much delight. And the Pr
phet *Jeremiah* ſaith, he deſired, a
thirſted after this hour, that he might,
a man may ſay, even have his belly full
reproaches, and affronts, and ſcorns,
of things to which he carried an extre
appetite, and of which he was very greed
and indeed they were moſt ſavory to hi
for the love of us.

But now if the Son of God, deſired d
honour and contempt, with ſo great app
tite, and received them with ſo much co
tentment, and joy for the love of us,
having no way deſerved them; me think
it ſhould be no ſuch ſtrange matter for us

who have ſo well deſerved all kind of diſ-
honour, and contempt, to deſire for love
f him, to be held for no other then what
we are; and to rejoyce in ſuffering thoſe
iſgraces: and affronts which we deſerve:
s Saint *Paul* did when he ſaid; For which
eaſon I rejoyce in my infirmities, and in-
ries, and affronts, and neceſſities, and
erſecutions, and all kind of difficulties for
hriſt our Lord. And writing to the Phi-
ppians, and treating of his impriſon-
ent, he deſires them to bear him compa-
y in the joy he had, to ſee himſelf in
ains for Chriſt our Lord. He had ſuch
n abundance of joy in the perſecutions,
nd afflictions which he ſuffered, that he
ad to ſpare for his friends, and therefore
e invited them to pertake thereof with
im. This is that milk which the bleſſed
poſtles ſucked from the breſt of Chriſt.
nd ſo we read thus of them; They were
ll of joy, and rejoycing, when they were
rried Priſoners before their Preſidents,
nd into their Synogogues, and eſteemed
for a great favour, and honour at the
ands of God; to be thought worthy to
ffer affronts, and injuries for the name
Chriſt. Herein they were imitated by
other

other Saints, as for example, by Saint I*natius* the Martyr, who when they w carrying him to be martyred at Ro with many ſcorns and reproaches, full of joy, and ſaid. *It is but now I begin to be a Diſciple of Chriſt.*

CHAP. XVI.

That the perfection of Humility, a *all other vertues conſiſts in perfo ing the acts thereof, with delight, cheerfulneſſe; and how much th ports towards our perſeverance in t tue.*

IT is the common Doctrine of the Ph ſophers, that the perfection of v conſiſts in performing the acts ther with delight and cheerfulneſſe. For t ing of the ſignes, whereby it ma known, whether a man have obtained habit of any vertue: They ſay they theſe; when a man works according that vertne, *Promptè, Faciliter, & lectabiliter:* with promptitude, with ſ ity, and with delight. He who hath

qui

quiried the habit of any art or ſcience, performs the works thereof with extream promptitude and facility; And we ſee, that he who is skilfull upon any Inſtrument, and hath gotten the habit thereof, playes with very great readineſſe and eaſe: and hath no need to provide himſelf, nor to think much of the matter, for even though he think of other things he will yet play well. Now in the ſelf ſame manner, he who hath acquired the habit of vertue, performs the acts thereof. And therefore if you will know, whether you have gotten the vertue of *humility*, look firſt whether you perform the works thereof with promptitude, and facility, for if you feel difficulty, or repugnance in the occaſions which preſent themſelves to you, it is a ſign that you have not yet acquired the perfection of that vertue. And if, for the bearing them well, you have need of preventions, and conſiderations, I confeſs it is a good way for the obtaining the perfection of that vertue, but ſtill it is a ſigne that you have not obtained it yet. As he who is to play upon the Lute, muſt think where to place one finger, and where another, and calling to mind the rules which

he

he was taught, doth well towards his learning to play; but withall, it is a signe that as yet, he hath not gotten the habit of that Instrument; For who hath got it, needs not call this or that to mind, to the end that he may play well. And so saith *Aristotle*. He who hath perfectly acquired the habit of any art, finds it so easie to perform the acts thereof, that he hath no need of cogitation, or deliberation how to do them, for the doing them well. And so the Philosophers come to say, that the vertue of a man is known by his sudden and inconsiderate acts: a mans vertue is not known by the acts which he performeth, upon great deliberation, but by such as do come from him at unawares.

Yea, and the Philosophers say yet more then this, *Plutarch* treating how it may be known, when a man hath obtained a vertue, gives two signes thereof; one of them which the great Philosopher *Zeno* left in writing, is by his Dreams. If even when you are in your dreams, as you are sleeping, you have no ill impulses, or unclean imaginations; or when, if you have them, you take no delight, or contentment in them, but the contrary: and when

you

you resist the temptation, and delight thereof, even in your Dreams, as if you were awake; this is a signe that vertue is well rooted in your souls, & that not only your will is subject to reason, but even your sensual appetite, and imagination. Just so, as when Coach-horses are well taught, though the Coachman lay the rains on their necks, and perhaps sleep himself, yet they go readily on their way. So saith the Philosopher: They who have perfectly obtained any vertue, & have totally subdued the causes, & brutish appetites which oppose it, go on their right way, even when they sleep. S. *Augustine* teacheth thus. Some servants of God carry so great an affection to vertue by keeping of Gods Commandements, and so great detestation against sin, and are so accustomed, and inured to the resistance of temptations when they are awake, as that they resist them also even when they sleep. In this sort some interpret that place of S. *Paul: Sive vigilemus, sive dormiamus, simul cum illo vivamus:* which imports not only that both living and dying, we must ever live with Christ, which is the common exposition: but moreover, that the zealous servants of God, must ever live

with Christ, and that not only waking, but also sleeping and dreaming.

The Philosophers go yet further, & say, that the third signe, to know, if a man hath perfectly obtained any vertue, is when he performs the works thereof *delectabiliter* with delight, for this is the principal signe wherein the perfection of vertue consists. If therefore you will see whether you have obtained the vertue of *humility*, examine your selves by that rule, which we delivered in the last Chapter; and see whether you be as glad of any dishonour and affront, as worldly men use to be of honour and estimation.

Besides, till we arrive to perform the actions of vertue, with delight and joy, it will be a hard thing to persevere and continue in vertue. Saint *Dorotheus* and some ancient *Fathers* were wont to say, that whatsoever was not performed with a smack of joy, could not last long. It may be for some fit you will live modestly & recollect your selfe; but till this flow from the very bottom of the heart, and by custome you make it natural to you, and perform it with sweetnesse and delight, you will not continue long therein, but it will passe, as constrai-

ſtrained, and forced. *Nullum violentum eſt perpetuum.* Nothing forc'd or violent, can long continue. For this reaſon it imports ſo much to exerciſe the acts of any vertue with conſtancy, as thereby to root it in the ſoul, which muſt even drink it up in ſuch ſort, that it may fall as it were of it ſelf upon the vertue, and may ſeem to be acts of our own nature, for ſo we ſhall perform them with joy and delight. By theſe means we may in a kind be ſecured, that we ſhall continue and perſevere therein. This is that, which the Prophet ſaith, *Bleſſed is that man, whoſe whole contentment, joy, and gladneſs is in the law of the Lord, and who make it his delights, and entertainments;* for that man will yield the fruit of good works, like a tree which is planted by the River ſide.

CHAP. XVII.

Of ſome means for the obtaining of this ſecond degree of Humility, and particularly of the example of Chriſt our Lord.

THey ordinarily appoint two ſeveral wayes, for the obtaining of moral ver-

tues. The one, reaſons and conſiderations which may convince and animate us thereunto; the other Exerciſe of the acts of that vertue, whereby we may get the habits of it. To begin with the firſt; one of the moſt principal, and effectual conſiderations whereby we may help our ſelves towards being humble, or rather the moſt principal of them all, is the example of Chriſt our *Lord* and *Redeemer*, whereof though we have already ſaid ſomewhat, there will ever be enough to add.

The whole life of Chriſt our *Lord*, was a moſt perfect Pattern of *Humility*, from the very time of his birth, to that other, of his expiring upon the Croſſe. But yet to this purpoſe, St. *Angnſtine* doth particularly ponder the example which he gave us, by waſhing the feet of his Diſciples upon that Thurſday of the laſt Supper, when he was even upon the very brim of his paſſion, and death. Chriſt our *Lord* ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, was not content with having given us the examples of his whole life paſt, nor yet with them alſo which he was ſhortly to give in his paſſion, the ſame being then ſo cloſe at hand, and when he was to appear according to the Prophet *Iſaiah*

Isaiah, the very last, or lowest of men: and the royal Prophet *David* saith, the *very reproach, and scorn of men, yea the very outcast of the world*: But our Lord Jesus knowing, that his hour was now at hand, wherein he was to passe out of this World, to his *Father*, he carried a great love to his Disciples, and was resolved that he would expresse it now towards the end of his life. And supper being ended, he rises from the Table, he puts off his upper garment, he girds a towel to himself, he puts water into a bason, he prostrates himself at the feet of his Disciples, yea and of *Judas* too: he washes them with those divine hands of his, and he wipes them with the towel wherewith he was girt. O unspeakable mystery! What is this, O Lord, which thou art doing? saith the Apostle St. *Peter*, *Thou*, O Lord, *to wash my feet*? The Disciples understood not then what he did: saith our Lord, *You understand not now what I am doing*; but yet ere long, I will declare it to you. He returns to the Table, and declares the mystery thus at large. *You call me Master, and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then, I being your Master and your Lord, have humbled my self, and have*

waſhed your feet, you are alſo to do the like to one another. I have given you an example, to the end, that you may learn of me, and do as I have done. This is the myſtery, that you learn to humble your ſelves as I have humbled my ſelf. The importance of this vertue of *humility* is on the one ſide ſo great, and ſo is the difficulty alſo on the other, that our Lord was not content with ſo many examples, as he had already given us, and had then ſo neer at hand to give; but that, as one who well knew our weakneſs, and who perfectly underſtood the malignity of that peccant humor, whereof our nature was ſick, he would needs give us this ſtrong Phyſick again it, and put it amongſt the chief Legacies of his laſt Will and Teſtament, that ſo it might remain the more deeply imprinted in all our hearts.

Upon thoſe words of Chriſt our Lord *Learn of me, for I am meek, and humble of heart*: St. *Auguſtine* exclaims thus: O ſoveraign Doctrine, O Maſter, and Lord of all men, into whom death entred by the meanes of pride, what is it, O Lord, which thou wilt have us come and learn of thee? *That I am meek, and humble of heart.* Thy

is that which you are to learn of me. In this are the treasures of the wisdom, and knowledge of the Father summed up, which have been hidden in thee, that thou tell us for the highest point, that we must come and learn of thee, that *Thou art meek, and humble of heart*: it is so high a thing, for a man to make himself little, that unless thou who art so great, hadst made thy self little, no man could have learnt it of thee? Yea, saith S. *Augustine*, so great, and so hard a thing it is, for a man to humble himself, and make himself little, that if God himself had not humbled himself, and become little, men would never have been brought to humble themselves. For there is nothing so deeply conveyed into their very bowels, and so incorporated, as it were, into their hearts, as this desire of being honored and esteemed; and therefore was all this necessary, to the end, that we might grow to be humble; for such Physick did the infirmity of our pride require; and such a wound, such a cure. But if such a receipt as this, for God to have made himself man, and to have humbled himself so much for our sakes, will not recover us, and cure our pride, I know not, saith S. *Augustine*,

what will ever be able to do it. Holy *Gu-ricus* being amazed at the great exampl of our Lords *humility*, exclaims and ex-preſſes that which we ſhould do. *Thou ha overcome* O Lord, *thou haſt overcome pride, thine example hath bound me han and foot: behold I render, and deliver m my ſelf into thy hands for an everlaſtin ſlave.*

It is alſo admirable which St. *Bernar* brings to this purpoſe, The Son of G (ſaith he) ſaw two creatures, and bo were generous, noble, and capable of th bleſſed ſtate to which they had been cre-ted by Almighty God, and they both lo themſelves, becauſe they would needs b like him. God created the Angels, and in-ſtantly Lucifer had a mind to be like A-mighty God. And then he carried othe after him, and God caſt them inſtant down to Hell; and ſo of Angels they be came devils. God alſo created Man, & in-ſtantly the devil ſtruck him with his ow leaproſie, and poyſon. They fell glutton-ouſly upon what he tempted them with namely that they ſhould be as God, an then they broke the divine commandment and ſo became like the devil. The Prophe

Eli

Eliseus said to his servant *Giezi* after he took the presents of the leprous *Naaman*. Thou hast taken the goods of *Naaman*, and behold his leaprosie shall also stick to thee, and to all thy descendents for ever. This was the judgment of God against man, that since he would needs have the riches of *Lucifer*, which was his pride, he should also have his leaprosie, which was the punishment thereof. You see therefore here, that man was undone, and made like the devil, because he would needs be like God. And what might now be fit for the Son of God to do, finding his eternal *Father* to be so jealous, and careful to maintain his own honour. I see saith he, that by my occasions my Father looseth his creatures. The Angels would needs be as I am, they overthrew themselves. Man would also be so, and he was also overthrown. They all have envy at me, and would fain be such as I am. Well then, behold, saith the Son of God, I will go in such a form, that whosoever will from henceforth become like me, shall not lose but gain, and for this came the Son of God from Heaven, and made himself man. O therefore let such a bounty and mercy be blessed, and praised, and glorified,

which moved Almighty God to condescend to that so great desire which we had to be like him; for now we may be as God, not according to falshood, and with a lye; and according to what the devil said, but according to truth, and not with pride and malice, but with much sanctity, and *humility*. Upon those words, *Vnto us a child is born*. The same Saint saith, since God being so great, made himself little for us, let us procure to humble our selves, and make our selves also little, that so it may not be to no purpose for us, that the great God made himself so little as to become a child for us: Because if you become not like this little child, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of some humane considerations, where we may be humble.

FRom the very beginning of this Treatise, we have been declaring the way for the getting of the vertue of *humility*, shewing that it is the foundation of

the vertues, the ſhort way to get them, the means to conſerve them, & if we poſſeſs this, we ſhall be maſters of them all. But yet, that it may appear that we mean not to carry it all by the only way of ſpirit, it will not be amiſſe, that we deſiver ſome humane reaſons, which may be more proportionable, and connatural to our weakneſſe, to the end, that being ſo convinced not only by way of ſpirit and perfection, but even of natural reaſon alſo, we may have more courage, and affection to the contempt of honour, and eſteem of the world, and to proceed in the way of *humility*, for all this will be needfull, for the obtaining of a thing ſo hard as this, and ſo it will be well that we help our ſelves of it.

Firſt therefore, let us conſider, and examine with attention what thing this honour & eſtimation of men is, which makes ſo continual War againſt us, and gives us all ſo much to do. Let us ſee what weight and bulk it hath, that ſo we may eſteem it no better then it deſerves, and may animate our ſelves to deſpiſe it. *Seneca* ſaid very well, *That there are many things which we hold to be great, not becauſe in-*

deed

deed they are great, but because our wretch-
edneſſe is ſuch, that the ſmall ſeems grea
and the little much to us: and he bring
the example of that weight which is o
dinarily carried by Ants: which In r
ſpect of their body is very great, bei
yet very ſmall in it ſelf; and juſt ſo it
with the honour, and eſtimation of t
World. If you deny it, I ask whet
you be either the better or the worſe, b
cauſe they eſteem you not? Infallibly y
are not. St. *Auguſtine* ſaith, *Neither*
the ill man made good by being eſteem
and praiſed, nor the good man made ill
being diſcommended and reproached. Th
of *Auguſtine* what thou wilt, that whic
deſire, is that my conſcience may not r
proach me in the ſight of God. Thi
that which imports, the reſt is foolery,
it neither gives, nor takes away. Anot
ſaith, *What is a man the better for be*
praiſed by another. And as much as a
man is in the ſight of God, ſo much in
he is, and no more. As St. *Paul* ſai
For not he that commendeth himſelf
approved, but whom the Lord comme
eth, 2 *Cor.* 10. 18. St. *Auguſtine* brin
a good compariſon to this purpoſe. *Pr*

and eſtimation of the world, is not greatneſſe, but ſwelling, and wind. When any part is ſwelled, it ſeems, but is not truly great: ſo proud men, who are eſteemed by the world, ſeem as if they were great, but they are not ſo; becauſe it is not greatneſſe, but ſwelling. Some ſick men are thought to be upon recovery, becauſe they look fat and well, but ſuch fatneſſe is not ſound nor good, but it is rather fickly and ſwelling. So ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, *is the applauſe and eſtimation of the World, it may puffe up, but it cannot make you great.* If then it be ſo, that the opinion and eſtimation of the World is not any thing of greatneſſe in it ſelf, but rather of ſickneſſe, and ſwelling, why do we goe up and down like Camelions, ſucking in wind with our mouthes open, that ſo we may be the more ſwollen, and ſick? It is better for a man to be in health, though he ſeem ſick, then to be ſick and ſeem ſound; ſo alſo is it better to be good, though he ſeem wicked, then to be wicked, and be held for good. For what good will it do you to be held vertuous, and ſpiritual, if indeed you be not ſo. St. *Jerome* upon theſe words. *His works ſhall praiſe him in the gates.* Not the vain

praiſes

praiſes of men, but your good works muſt needs defend and praiſe you, when you appear in judgement before Almighty God.

St. *Gregory* relates of a Monk in the Monaſtery of *Hiconia*, who was generally eſteemed in the opinion of being a Saint, and eſpecially for being very abſtinent, and full of penance. But the hour of his death being come, he deſired that all the Monks might be called to him. For their parts they were very glad of it, as conceiving that they were to hear from him, ſome matter of much edification, bnt he trembled, and was full of anguiſh, and found himſelf compelled from within, to declare his true ſtate to them. And ſo he made them know that he was damned, becauſe all his life had been but Hypocriſie. For when they thought he faſted, and did penance, he eat ſecretly, and *for this*, ſaith he, *am I now delivered over to a terrible and furious Beaſt, whoſe tail hath wreathed it ſelf about, and tied my feet, and his head is already entring now into my mouth to fetch out & carry away my ſoul with him for ever.* And with theſe words he expired to the great amazement of them all. And now, what was this miſerable creature

ture the better for having been reputed a Saint.

St. *Athanasius* compares proud men, who goe in search of honour, to children hunting butter-flies. Others compare them to spiders, who destroy and defeat themselves in making their webs, for the hunting of flies. According to that of *Isai. They weave the spiders web, Isa.* 59. 5. For so the proud men ever disimbowels himself, and casts up as it were his very maw, that he may obtain a little humane praise. We read in the life of a certain honorable Person, that he ever shewed a most particular detestation against the opinion, and estimation of the world, for he said that it was the cause of great mischiefs, and the impediment of many blessings. And he was heard to cry out, with much earnestnesse, many times. *O opinion, opinion and estimation of the world, how many mischiefs hast thou wrought already, how many workest thou now, and how many wilt thou work hereafter?*

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of other humane Reaſons which will help us to be humble.

ST. *Chriſoſtome* upon thoſe words of St. *Paul*: *Not to think of himſelf more highly then he ought to think, but to think ſoberly*, *Rom.* 12. 3. goes proving very expreſly, that the proud and arrogant perſon, is not only wicked and ſinful, but a ſtark fool withall. To prove this, he brings that of *Iſaiah*. *The fool ſpeaks fooliſh things, and by the follies which he uters, you ſhall underſtand him indeed to be a fool.* Well then, let us obſerve the follies which are uttered by the arrogant and proud man; and we ſhall quickly ſee what a fool he is. What is that, which the firſt proud creature uttered, which was *Lucifer*, *I will mount up to Heaven, I will place and exalt my throne above the clouds, and being there, above the ſtars, I will be like the Moſt High.* What could be more fooliſhly, and diſ-jointedly conceived. And in the tenth Chapter, he ſets down very arrogant and fooliſh words of *Aſſur* King

of the *Assirians*, wherewith he glorified himself; in that with his powerful hand he had conquered, and subdued all the Kings of the earth. *As when a man takes the poor little Birds out of a nest, which are bred up by elder Birds, and as a man who goes to gather the eggs which are not defended, so have I* (saith he) *conquered all the earth with the same facility, nor was there any one who durst so much as stir, yea, or so much as open his mouth against me, either in earnest or in jest.* What greater folly can there be then this, saith St. *Chrisostome?* And there he also brings in divers other speeches of proud men, which discover very sufficiently what fools they are, so that if you hear, and mark their words, you will not discern whether they be words of a proud man, or of some other who is a meer sot, so absurd and dis-jointed they are. And so we daily see that as fools move us to laughter, with what they say and do, so do also proud men in their conversation, by the arrogant words which they utter, redounding to their own praise, and the gestures which they use, and by the state and foolish gravity wherewith they walk; and by the high account, which, forsooth,

ſooth, they will needs have men make boo
of their perſons, and of all that which i
theirs, and by the eſteem wherein they hol
themſelves. And St. *Chriſoſtome* adds
that the folly of proud men, is worſe an
worthy of greater reproach then that whic
is natural; for this carries no fault or ſh
with it, but the other doth. From whenc
alſo follows another difference betwee
theſe two follies, that they who are natu
ral fools move all men to be ſorry, an
compaſſionate their miſery; Whereas th
folly of proud men moves not others t
compaſſion and pity, but to laughter an
ſcorn.

Proud men are ſots, and ſo we muſt pro
ceed with them. For as we muſt conde
ſcend, and ſeem to like that which fo
ſay, that ſo we may have peace with the
though indeed the thing be not ſo, but y
we will not contradict them, becauſe i
fine they are fools:) juſt ſo we proce
with proud men: And indeed this h
mor, and madneſſe raigns ſo much in t
World at this day, that now we can han
ly converſe with men, but we muſt be fai
to ſmooth them, & to ſay that which is n
ſo, no nor is ſo conceived by us. For th
oth

other takes ſo much delight to underſtand, that his ſtories give contentment, and ſeem ſo well to others, that there is no better way to oblige him, and to gain his good will then by praiſing him. And this ſaith the *Wiſeman*, is one of the vanities and follies which he ſaw in the world, namely, *That wicked men were praiſed as good; becauſe they were in high place; I ſaw the wicked buried, who while they lived were in the holy place, and they were praiſed in the City, (ſo the vulgar Latine hath it) as for righteous works this alſo is vanity.* What greater vanity, and madneſſe can there be, then to praiſe men, when they think there is no cauſe for it, yea and to do as many times is done, when ſome praiſe others, for that which they did ill, or at leaſt for what they thought was ill done. And the jeſt is, that they have already told others what they really think of you, but yet with you, becauſe forſooth you muſt be kept contented, they ſtick not for the moſt part to lye. At other times they are fain to ſeek out bywaies, that ſo they may be able without lying to ſpeak well of that, which indeed they do not like, and the matter is, becauſe they muſt treat you, and condeſcend to you

as

as they would, to ſome ſtupid ſot or foole. The while, that other conceives that you are of the ſame humor with him, and that you are alſo glad when you are dealt with after the ſame manner, and that the beſt morſel of meat which he can be able to give you, after you have preached, or performed ſome ſuch thing, is to tell you that you diſcharged it excellently well, and that all the World was highly pleaſed with you, and he treats you thus, to keep you in contentment, or elſe to gain your good opinion and affection, whereof perhaps he hath need; but that for which this ſerves indeed is to make you a veryer fool then you were before, becauſe he praiſes you for what you ſaid, or did ill, and ſo you are the more animated, and confirmed in committing the ſame errours another time. Men dare not now a dayes ſpeak what they think, becauſe they know that truth is grown troubleſome. Truth procures hatred. And they know that he who is mad, and frantick refuſes to take Phyſick, and ſpits in the Doctor's face, when he deſires to cure him: ſo doth the proud man reſiſt admonition and reformation, and therefore men will not tell ſuch a one that which

will

will diſcontent him, but they think it the ſhorter way to make him think they like that, which yet indeed they miſlike; and the other believes all, and is well pleaſed with it: Whereby alſo we may ſee the truth of that which we delivered in the laſt Chapter, namely, how great a vanity, and madneſſe it is, to make any account of the praiſes of men, ſince we ſee that in this age, all is complement, deceit, flattery, and lies. *Complimento, complo ymiento; I comply, and I lye, and the cauſe why I lye, is that I may comply.*

Proud men, ſaith St *Chryſoſtome*, are abhorred by all. As the *Wiſe-man* ſaith, *Every arrogant man is a very abomination in the ſight of God, Prov.* 16. 5. And of ſeven things which God abhors, he places pride for the firſt. And not only are they abhorred by God, but by men alſo.

This very World, gives proud men the pay of their pride, for it puniſheth them in that very thing, to which they moſt pretend. They pretend to be eſteemed by all, and they are held by all to be ſots and fools. They pretend to be beloved by all, and they are abhorred by all. By their betters,

betters, becauſe they make themſelves the equals; by their equals, becauſe they mak themſelves their betters; by their inferior becauſe they depreſſe them more then the ſhould. Even the domeſtick ſervants ſpe ill of their proud maſter, and indure hi not. Where pride is, there is reproach. An on the other ſide, the humble man is val ed, and eſteemed, affected, and beloved b all. As children who for their goodneſs their innocency, their ſimplicity of hea are beloved, ſo ſaith St. *Gregory* are th humble. For that clearneſſe and plain neſſe of their ſpeech, and that converſ without doubleneſſe or deceit, even rob men of their very hearts. *Humility* is load-ſtone which draws all mens affection to it: and it ſeems that all men if the could, would take this humble man in their very hearts.

To the end, that we may be fully pe ſwaded that it is a meer madneſſe to deſi and procure the eſteem, and opinion men. St. *Bernard* makes a very good d lemma, and concludes thus. *Either it madneſſe in the Son of God, to abaſe a empty himſelf ſo far, as to chooſe contem and diſhonour for himſelf, or elſe it is t*

trea

treame madneſse in us, to be in ſo great deſire of the honour, and eſtimation of the World. It was not folly, or madneſſe in the Son of God, neither could it be, though the World thought it was, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *To the blind and proud Gentiles, and Jews, Chriſt our Lord ſeems to be a folly or madneſſe: but unto us who have the light of Faith, he is infinite wiſdome, and love.* Now if his were infinite wiſdome, it follows that ours is ſtupid folly, for making ſuch account as we do of the eſteem, and honour of the World.

CHAP. XX.

The way to be valued, and eſteemed by men, is to get vertue and humility.

IF with all which we have ſaid, you will not abate the edge and deſire of honour and eſtimation, but will ſtill be ſaying, that it is a great point of wiſdome to have a good opinion, & eſtimation among men, and that this imports very much, even for the edification of your Neighbours, and for many other things: and that the *Wiſe-*

man

man counſels us to have a care thereof: *Have a care of thy good name.* I ſay, let be ſo in the name of God; I am conte you have care to keep the good na you have. But yet underſtand, that you deſire it, as you ſay you do, you er even in order to that for which you de it, and that you ſhall never obtain t end by this means, but the direct contra The ſafe and certain way whereby y ſhall infallibly come to be much val and eſteemed by men, is *Vertue*, and *H mility*, as St. *Chriſoſtome* ſaith, *Proc every one of you in particular to be a g religious man, and to be the meaneſt a humbleſt of all, and appear to be ſo by y manner of living; and in the occaſi which ſhall preſent themſelves to you, y ſhall be valued and eſteemed by all m* This is indeed the honour of a religio man, who hath forſaken the World, a profeſſeth himſelf to be a Citizen of H ven. And on the contrary ſide, for him deſire to be valued and eſteemed by m is a diſhonour and affront to him, which men would juſtly deſpiſe him. this eſtimation is properly belonging to t World, and that which you forſook wh

y

you made that holy vow at your Baptiſme.

Will you clearly ſee how ſhamefull, and reproachful a thing it is, for ſuch men to affect the eſteem of the World, who profeſſe to aſpire towards perfection? Let ſuch a deſire come but once ſo to light, as that others may diſcern that you deſire it, and you will quickly find how much your ſelf will be confounded, and out of countenance, that any ſuch thing ſhould be conceived of you. We have a very good example of this, in the holy Goſpel. The Evangeliſts relate, that the Apoſtles went once with Chriſt our Lord, but yet at ſuch diſtance from him, that they might think he heard them not, and ſo they went diſcourſing & arguing amongſt themſelves, which of them ſhould be the chief, and beſt man amongſt them. But when they were all come home to *Capernaum*, he asked them what that was about which they had been diſcourſing upon the way. And the holy Goſpel ſaith, that the poor men were ſo aſhamed, and out of countenance to ſee their pretenſion, and ambition diſcovered, that they had not one word to ſay. But they held their peace, *Mark* 9. 35. For by the way they had diſputed among themſelves,

who ſhould be the greateſt. But then di
the Saviour of the World take them i
hand, and ſay, *You muſt know, O you m
Diſciples, that amongſt worldly men, a
them who live according to the cuſtome
the world, they who govern and co
mand, will be eſteemed, and honoured
great Perſons. But in my ſchoole it
otherwiſe; for the greateſt there is to
the leaſt and muſt be a ſervant to all t
reſt. If any man deſire to be firſt, t
ſame ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervaut of a
Mark 9. 35.* By nothing can you loo
more then if once it come to be found, th
you deſire and pretend to be valued a
eſteemed by men, and that you are ſta
ing upon puntilios, & ſpend your thou
upon ſuch toyes as theſe. And ſo
Climacus ſaith very well; *That vain
ry hath many times been an occaſion o
nominy to the owners, for it hath m
them ſet upon things whereby they h
proclaimed their vanity and ambition,
ſo came to infamy and confuſion. B
venture* adds, *That pride blinds the
derſtanding in ſuch ſort, that many ti
the more pride you have, the leſſe you k
it: and ſo as being blind, a proud*
ſa

ſaith, and doth ſuch things, as that if himſelf could ſee them well, he then would not for the World either ſay, or do them, even though there were no ſuch thing as God, or vertue, but meerly for that reputation and honours ſake, which is ſo eagerly purſued. How many times doth it happen, that a man is troubled, and complains, becauſe they made no reckoning of him, in ſuch an occaſion, or that they preferred ſome other before him in ſuch a buſineſſe; he conceiving that it belonged to him, and that it will redound to his diſhonour, and that others will diſcover it and reflect upon it; and under this colour, he gives them to underſtand the exception which he takes, and the trouble which he ſuſtains, by means whereof in very deed, he remains more noted and diſeſteemed, becauſe he is held now for proud, and for a man that ſtands upon certain points of honour, which amongſt humble and good Chriſtians, is a moſt abominable thing. Whereas if he would have paſſed it over, and neglected himſelf, and given way, that ſuperiors might do their will, he might have gained much honour, and been much eſteemed for it,

So that though there were no such thing as a way of ſpirit, but that men were only to live in a courſe of prudence, and diſcretion, yea and even according to the very Laws of the World, the true and certain way for a man to be valued, eſteemed, affected, and beloved by men, is to addict himſelf ſeriouſly to *Vertue* and *Humility*. Yet among the Gentiles, it is related of *Ageſilaus* who was Chief of the *Lacedemonians*, and accounted a Wiſe man among them, that being asked by *Socrates*, how a man ſhould do to make all others eſteem and conceive well of him, made this anſwer, *If you ſhall be ſuch as you deſire to ſeem.* And afterward, the ſame man being asked concerning the ſame thing, anſwered thus, *If you ſpeak ever well, and do better.* Another Philoſopher, that had a great friend, who on every occaſion ſpoke all good of him, and telling him one day that he owned him much, becauſe whereſoever he chanced to be, he praiſed him and ſpake of his vertues; the Philoſopher anſwered him thus, *I pay you well for your pains, by living ſo, as that you may lye in any of thoſe things which you have ſaid of me.*

But now for all this, we ſay not that we muſt give our ſelves to *vertue* and *humility*, that we may be valued and eſteemed by men, for that were pride and a perverſe errour. That which we ſay is, that if we endeavour to be humble indeed, and at the heart, we ſhall be valued and eſteemed much, whether we will or no: nay, and the more we fly from eſteem and deſire to be deſpiſed, it will follow us the faſter. S. *Jerome* treating of the devout Matron *Paula*, ſaith, *Flying from honour, ſhe was more honoured.* For as the ſhadow whileſt a man flies from it, follows him, and on the contrary ſide, if he follows the ſhadow it flies from him, and the faſter he runs, the more it flies; and ſo that he can never over take it; juſt ſo it is; in the point of honour and eſtimation.

This our Lord Chriſt taught in the holy Goſpel, when he diſcourſed of the way men were to hold in publick meetings. *When you ſhall be invited* (ſaith he) *ſit not down in the higheſt place, leſt perhaps a gueſt of greater quality then your ſelf may have been invited*; & when he that invited you comes, he wiſh you to quit that place, and then you deſcend lower with much

much ſhame. *But that which you are to do, is to ſit down in the loweſt place, that ſo when he comes who invited you, he may cauſe you to aſcend higher, and then you ſhall receive honour before all the company.* Which in ſubſtance is the ſame that the Holy Ghoſt ſaid by the mouth of the *Wiſe-man, Prov.* 25. 6, 7. *Put not forth thy ſelf in the preſence of the King, and ſtand not in the place of great men. For better it is that it be ſaid unto thee, come up hither; then that thou ſhouldſt be put lower in the preſence of the Prince, whom thine eyes have ſeen.* But the parable concludes, ſaying, *For every man who exalteth himſelf ſhall be humbled, and he that humbles himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Here you ſee how the humble man who chuſes the loweſt and meaneſt place, is valued and eſteemed, not only before God, but before men alſo; and on the other ſide, the proud man, who ſeeks the beſt, and higheſt ſeat, is undervalued, and deſpiſed. St. *Auguſtine* exclaims, and ſaith, *O holy Humility, how unlike art thou to pride. Pride caſt* Lucifer *down out of Heaven: but Humility brought the Son of God from thence to become man. Pride caſt* Adam *out*

Par-

Paradiſe: but humility *carried the good thief in thither; Pride divided and confounded the tongues of the Gyants: but* humility *united all them which were divided. Pride transformed* Nabucadonoſor *into a beaſt; but* humility *made* Joſeph *Lord of* Ægypt, *and Prince of the people of* Iſrael. *Pride drowned* Pharaoh, *but* humility *raiſed and exalted* Moſes.

CHAP. XXI.

That Humility *obtaineth inward peace of mind, and that it cannot be had without it.*

LEarn of me, *for I am meek, and humble of heart, and you ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.* One of the Chief, and moſt efficatious reaſons which we can bring for to deſpiſe honour, and learn to be humble, that which Chriſt our Redeemer propounds to us, in theſe words, that it is a moſt excellent means, for the obtaining of interiour quietneſſe, and peace to the ſoul; a thing ſo much deſired by all ſpiritual men, and which St. *Paul* ſets down

for one of the fruits of the Holy Ghost *Gal.* 5. 22. *But the fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, &c.* That we may the better underſtand the quietneſſe and peace which the humble man enjoyes, it will be well, that we conſider the diſquiet and reſtleſſeneſſe which the proud man ever carries in his heart. *For one contrary is better known by another.*

The holy Scripture is full of ſentences, which declare that wicked men have not peace. *There is no peace, ſaith the Lord, unto the wicked*, Iſai. 48. 22. *For they have healed the hurt of the Daughter of my People ſlightly, ſaying, peace, peace, when there is no peace*, Jer. 8. 11. *Waſting and deſtruction are in their paths*, Iſa. 59. 7, 8. *The way of peace they know not.* They know not what kind of thing peace is, and though ſometimes they may ſeem outwardly to have peace, yet that is not true peace; for within in their very hearts they have a War, which their conſcience is ever making againſt them. *Behold for peace I had great bitterneſſe, Iſa.* 38. 17. Wicked men ever live with bitterneſſe and ſadneſſe of heart.

Proud men are ſubject after a particular man-

manner to great unquietneſſe, and want of peace. And the expreſſe reaſon hereof we may very well collect out of St. *Auguſtine*, who ſaith, that *Envy grows out of Pride, whoſe Daughter it is*: and it is never to be found without the company of this hateſull iſſue. The two ſins, Pride, and Envie, make the devil to be that very devil which he is. Now then, by this we may underſtand what miſchief theſe two ſins are like to work in the heart of man: ſince they are bad enough to make the devil a devil. He who on the one ſide, ſhall be full of pride, and deſire of honour, and ſees that things ſucceeds not according to his deſign; and on the other ſide, is alſo full of envie, which is the Daughter of pride; when he ſhall ſee that others are more eſteemed and preferred before him, will certainly be full of bitterneſſe, and reſtleſsneſſe: for there is nothing which ſo wounds the proud mans heart, as ſuch things.

The holy Scripture paints this to the life, in the perſon of proud Haman; He was the favourite of King *Ahaſuerus*, above all the Princes and Grandees of his Dominions. He had abundance of temporal goods and riches, and was ſo highly valu-

ed, and esteemed by all, that now it seemed that there was nothing left for him to desire. And yet nevertheless it troubled him so greatly, that one single man, and he a mean person, who sat usually at the gate of the Pallace, made no reckoning of him, nor did him reverence, nor rose up whilest he was passing by; that he esteemed not all that he possessed at a rush, in comparison of the distemper, and vexation he suffered thereby. This himself confessed, by way of complaint to his Wife, and friends, whilest in discourse he was speaking to them of his prosperity and power otherwise. *Ester.* 5. 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see* Mordecai *the Jew sitting at the King's gate.* Thus we may see the restlessnesse of a proud man, and the high waves and storms which tosse his heart, (According to that of the Prophet; *The wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest,*) *Isa.* 57. 20. Like a Sea which is angry and fierce, so high goes the heart of a proud and wicked man. And now the rage which grew in the heart of *Haman*, upon that occasion was so great, that he disdained to lay hold upon *Mordecai*, who was but a poor

poor particular man, unleſſe knowing him to be a Jew by Nation, he might alſo procure warrants from the King, by Vertue whereof, all that race of men, who were to be found in his Dominions might be put to death. He commanded alſo a very high gibbet to be erected in a Court of his own houſe, whereupon he meant that *Mordecai* ſhould be hanged. But his dream fell out far otherwiſe, and the Jews proved to be the men, who executed upon their enemies, the ſentence which had been given againſt them: and *Haman* himſelf was hanged upon the very gallows, which he had prepared for *Mordecai*.

But firſt, there happened a ſound mortification to him, and it was this. He going one morning very early to the Court, in order to the reverence which he had deſigned, and to obtain a Warrant from the King for the executing thereof, it happened that the night before, the King not having been able to ſleep, commanded them to bring the Hiſtory, and Chronicles of his Times; and when by reading, they were come to thoſe particulars of what *Mordecai* had done in ſervice of the King,

by

by diſcovery of a certain treaſon which ſome of his own ſervants had plotted againſt him, he enquired what reward had been given that man for that ſervice; and they told him none at all. The King then asked who was without, and whether yet men were come to make their Court. They told him that *Haman* was there, and ſo he was bidden to enter. The King then asked him this queſtion; *What will it be fit to do for that man, to whom the King deſires to honour?* Now *Haman* conceiving that himſelf was to be the man, to whom that honour was to be done, made this anſwer: *The man whom the King deſires to honour, ſhould be clad in the Kings Princely robes, and ſet upon the Kings own Horſe, with the Crown Royal upon his head: and one of the prime men of the Court ſhould goe before him, leading the Horſe in his hand, and proclaiming thus in the publick places of the City, Thus is he to be honoured whom the King will honour. Well then*, ſaid the King, *Goe thou to that* Mordecai, *who keeps at the Court gate, and do all that thou haſt ſaid to me, and be ſure thou fail in no one circumſtance.*

Think

Think now what Anguiſh that wicked and proud heart did feel. He durſt not fail in executing the Order to a hair. It ſeemed beyond imagination, to think of a greater mortification then this: yet inſtantly after followed that other, of his being hanged upon that very gibbet which he had cauſed to be provided for *Mordecai*. *This is the pay which Pride is wont to give to ſuch as ſerve it.*

Now let us conſider, from whence all this cataſtrophe grew: Becauſe forſooth, *Mordecai* would not riſe up: For, ſuch a foolery as this is able to keep proud men ſo unquiet and reſtleſſe, that by it they ſhall ever be wounded and made ſad at the heart. And ſo we ſee it at this day in worldly men, and ſo much more do we ſee it, as the men are in more eminent places. They ever have their hearts as bitter as gall, and they ever walk up and down the World with perpetual unquietneſſe, and want of reſt.

Hence we may underſtand, another particular; namely, that although it be true, that there is a ſickneſſe of melancholy, yet many times it happens that it is not the humor of melancholy or any corporal infirmity,

mity, but it is the very humor of pride which is a ſickneſſe of the ſoul. You are melancholy and ſad, becauſe you performed not ſuch or ſuch a thing with ſo much credit and reputation, as you fancied to your ſelf; but rather you conceive that you are diſgraced, or becauſe you are forgotten and caſt aſide. The buſineſſe proved not as you deſired; That Sermon, that Diſputation, thoſe concluſions; but you rather think that you have loſt opinion and credit by it, and therefore you are melancholy and ſad, yea and when you are to do any of theſe publick things, the very fear of the ſucceſſe, makes you afflicted and grieved. Theſe are ſome of thoſe things, which make the proud man melancholy and ſad.

But the humble of heart, who deſire no honour or eſtimation, but contents himſelf with a mean place, is free from all this reſtleſsneſſe and diſquiet, and enjoyes great peace, according to the words of Chriſt our Lord, from whom that Saint took this ſaying of his: *If there be peace in this World, the humble of heart poßeſſes it.* And therefore, though there were nothing of perfection to be looked after, but

but only our own intereſt, and the keeping our hearts in peace and quietneſſe, even for this, and this alone, we ought to ſeek *humility*; for thus we ſhould come to live; whereas the other is but to lead a kind of dying life.

St. *Auguſtine* to this purpoſe relates a certain thing of himſelf; That our *Lord* gave him to underſtand the blindneſſe and miſery wherein he was: *As I went one day* (ſaith he) *full of care in thought of an Oration which I was to recite before the Emperour in his praiſe, whereof the greateſt part was to be falſe: and my ſelf procuring to be praiſed for my pains, even by them who knew that it would be falſe* (*that men may ſee how far the vanity and folly, and madneſſe of the World extends it ſelf:*) *as I went, I ſay, with much thought hereof, and was full of trouble and care, how the buſineſſe might ſucceed; and having as it were even a kind of feaver upon me of conſuming thoughts, it happened, that in one of the ſtreets of* Milan, *there was a poor beggar, who after he had gotten well to eat and drink, was playing tricks and taking his pleaſure; and in fine, was very merry and jolly. But when I ſaw this,*

I fell to sigh, and represent to my friends who were present there, to what misery our madnesse hath made us subject. Since in all our troubles, and namely in those wherein we found our selves at that time carrying a great burthen of infelicity upon our backs, and being wounded with the vexation of a thousand inordinate appetites, and daily adding one burthen to another) we did not so much as procure to seek any other thing than only some secret kind of contentment and joy, wherein the poor beggar had out-stripped us already, who perhaps should never be able to overtake him therein. For that which he had now obtained by means of a little alms, namely the joy of temporal felicity, I still went seeking & hunting out with so much solicitude and care. It is true, saith He, that the poor man had no true joy, but it is also true, that the contentment which I sought, was more false then this: and in fine he then was merry, and I sad, he was secure, and I full of cares and fear. And if any man should ask me now, whether I had rather be glad or grieved, I should quickly make answer, that I had rather be glad; and if he should ask me yet a-

again,

gain, whether I had rather be that beggar, or my self, I should chuse to be my self, though I were then full of afflictions, but yet for ought I know, I should have no reason to make this choice. For I ask what cause I can alledge; For my being more learned, gave me no content at all; but only desired to give content to others, by my knowledge; and yet that, not by way of instructing them, but without doubt, (saith he) that poor man was more happy then I, not only because he was merry and jolly, when I was full of cogitations and cares, which drew even my very bowels out of my body: but because he had gotten his Wine by lawful means, whereas I was hunting after vain glory by the way of telling lyes.

CHAP. XXII.

Of another kind of means more effectual for obtaining the Vertue of Humility.

WE have already spoken of the first kind of means usually assigned for the obtaining of Vertue, which are certain reasons and considerations both divine

vine and humane. But yet the inclination we have to this vice of this pride is ſo very great, by reaſon that the deſire of Divinity (*Eritis ſicut Dii*) remains ſo rooted in our hearts from our firſt parents; that no conſiderations at all are ſufficient to make us take our laſt leave of the impulſe and edge which we have to be honoured and eſteemed; It happens to us herein, which to others who are full of fear. For how many reaſons ſoever you give to perſwade ſuch perſons, that they have no cauſe to fear ſuch or ſuch a thing, they yet make this anſwer, I ſee well that all you ſay is true, and I would fain not fear, but yet I cannot obtain it of my ſelf. Juſt ſo, ſome ſay in our caſe, I well perceive that all thoſe reaſons which you have brought againſt the opinion and eſtimation of the World, are good and true, and they convince that all is but meer vanity and wind, but yet with all this, I cannot by any means win ſo much of my ſelf, as not to make ſome account thereof. I would fain do it if I could, but me thinks I know not how thoſe kind of things, tranſports, and diſquiets me ſtrangely. Well then, as no reaſons and conſiderations, are ſufficient to

free

free the fearful man from fear, but that besides this, we must entreat him to put his hand to work, and bid him draw near to feel and touch those things, which seemed to him to be bugbears and sprights; and advise him to goe sometime by night, and alone to the same places where he thought he saw them, that so he might find by experience, that there was nothing indeed, but that all was his imagination and apprehension, that so by this means he may lose his fear: so also for the making us give over the desire of opinion and estimation of the World, the Saints affirm that no reasons or considerations are sufficient: but that we must also use the means of action, and of the exercises of *Humility*, for this is the principal and most efficatious means, which we for our parts can imploy towards the obtaining of this Vertue.

St. *Basil* saith, *That at Sciences and Arts are acquired by practise, so also are the moral vertues.* That a man may be a good Musitian, a good Rethorician, a good Philosopher, and a good Work-man in any kind, let him exercise himself herein, and he will grow perfect. And so also, for obtaining the habit of *Humility*, and

and all the reſt of the moral vertues, we muſt exerciſe our ſelves in the acts thereof and by this means we ſhall poſſeſſe them. And if any man will tell me, that for the compoſing and moderating our paſſions, and the affections of the mind, and for the obtaining alſo of Vertue, the conſiderations and reaſons, the documents and councels of holy Scripture are ſufficient, he is deceived as St. *Baſil* ſaith. This would be like him who ſhould learn to build a houſe, and yet never exerciſe himſelf therein, but only in hearing the documents and rules of art; In which caſe it is certain, that he would never prove a good Workman. And as little will he poſſeſſe *humility*, or any other vertue, who will not exerciſe himſelf therein. And in confirmation hereof, the Saint brings that of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*; *For not the hearers of the Law are juſt before God, but the doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified*, *Rom.* 2. 13. It is not enough to hear many documents and reaſons, but they muſt be put in execution. For practice conduces more to this buſineſſe then all the ſpeculation in the World. And though it be moſt true, that all Vertue, and every thing which is good muſt come to us from

from the hand of God, and that we cannot compaſſe it by our own ſtrength; yet the ſame *Lord* who is to give it, is pleaſed that we ſhould help our ſelves by our own endeavours.

St. *Auguſtine* upon thoſe words of Chriſt our Lord; *If I then your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers feet, Joh.* 13. 14. ſaith, that this is that which Chriſt our Lord intended to teach us by this example of waſhing his Diſciples feet: This is that, O bleſſed *Peter*, which thou didſt not know when thou wouldeſt not conſent that Chriſt ſhould waſh thy feet. He promiſed that thou ſhouldeſt know it afterward, and now, that afterward is come, and now thou ſhalt underſtand it. If we will obtain the Vertue of *Humility*, we muſt exerciſe our ſelves in the outward acts thereof. For I have given you an example, to the end that you may do as I have done. Since the omnipotent and ſoveraign Lord humbled himſelf; ſince the Son of God abaſed, and imployed himſelf in mean and lowly exerciſes, waſhing the feet of his Diſciples, ſerving his bleſſed Mother, and the holy *Joſeph*, and being ſubject and obedient to them

them in whatsoever they commanded; let us learn of them, and exercise our selves in humble and mean imployments, and thus we shall come to obtain the *Vertue* of *Humility* St. *Bernard* saith, *The humiliation of the exteriour man is the way and means to obtain the vertue of Humility; as patience is for the obtaining peace, and reading or study for the obtaining of knowledge.* Therefore if you will obtain the *Vertue* of *Humility*, do not fly from the exercise of humiliation: for if you say, that either you cannot, or will not humble or abase your selves; as little have you a mind to obtain the *Vertue* of *Humility*. St. *Augustine* proves it very well, and gives the reason, why this exercise of humiliation, is so useful, important, and necessary, for the obtaining of true humility of heart. The inward and outward man are so interlaced and united together, and the one depends so much upon the other, that when the heart is humbled and abased, the heart is stirred up towards the love of *humility*. That humbling my self before my Brother and kissing his feet, hath somewhat in it; that poor and mean coat, that low and base Office, hath I know not what,

which

which goes ingendring and breeding Humility in the heart, and if it be there already, it conſerves and increaſes it. And thus St. *Dorotheus* anſwers this queſtion, how a man with a poor and mean coat, which belongs to the body, may come to obtain the *Vertue* of *Humility* which inhabits the ſoul. *It is certain*, ſaith he, *that the body in many caſes gives a good or ill diſpoſition to the ſoul. And ſo we ſee the ſoul hath one kind of diſpoſition, when the body is well, and another when it is ſick; one when it is full fed, and another when it is very hungry. Now in the ſelf ſame manner, the ſoul veſts it ſelf with one kind of inclination, when a man is ſeated upon a throne, or upon a horſe richly adorned, and with another, when he ſits upon the ground, or is riding upon a jade; and one kind of inclination it hath, when he is ſet out in ſumptuous cloathes, and another when he is but covered with a poor coat.*

St. *Baſil* alſo noted this very well; and ſaith, *As a gallant and ſhining attire lifts up the hearts of worldly men, and ingenders in them certain fumes of eſtimation and pride; ſo doth a poor and mean habit*

habit awake in the heart of religious men, and of the servants of God, an inclination to Humility, *and breeds a disesteem of one self; and it make men endure better to be despised.* And the Saint adds further, *That as worldly men desire rich and glorious cloathes, that so they may be the better known and esteemed thereby; so the good servants of God, and such as are truly humble desire to be poor and meanly clad, that so they may be valued the lesse: and especially because they conceive themselves to find much help therein, towards the conservation and augmentation in true* Humility. Amongst all the exteriour humiliations, that of poor and mean cloathing is one of the chief, and for this, we find it to have been so much used by such as are truly humble.

Towards the purchase of *humility* of heart, or any other interiour vertue, the exteriour exercise and practise of the same vertue doth profit much, because the will is much more moved thereby, then by bare desires. For it is clear, that present objects moves us more then absent, and we are moved more by seeing things, then by hearing of them; and from hence the Pro-

verb

verb came, *That which the eyes ſees not, the heart rues not.* One great affront well endured with a good will, ſhall breed more of the vertue of patience in your ſoul, then four affronts will do, when you have but the only deſire without the deed. And the ſpending of one day in exerciſing ſome mean and low Office, and the wearing ſome poor and mean apparel ſome one day, will help your ſoul more to the *vertue* of *Humility*, then many daies of meer deſires will doe. We have experience every day, that a man hath repugnance to perform one of the ordinary mortifications which we uſe; and within two or three daies after he hath begun to do them, he finds no difficulty therein at all, and yet before he did them, he had conceived many purpoſes and deſires thereof, and yet ſtill they were not ſtrong enough to overcome the difficulty: and to this we may adde that which is ſaid by *School Divines*, *That when the interiour act is accompanied by the exteriour, it is commonly more gracious and intenſe.* So that it helps much in all reſpects, towards the obtaining of the *vertue of Humility*, to imploy our ſelves exteriouſly about objects which are mean and baſe.

And becauſe Vertue is conſerved and augmented by the ſame means whereby it is obtained, therefore as the exteriour exerciſe of Humility is neceſſary for the obtaining the vertue of *Humility*, it will alſo be neceſſary for the cuſtody & increaſe thereof; whereupon it follows that this exerciſe is very important for all, not only for beginners, but alſo for great proficients, as we ſaid when we were treating of mortification. For it is a good rule that is given by one in theſe words; *It will greatly help that we perform thoſe offices with all poſſible devotion, wherein Humility and charity are exerciſed moſt.* And in another place he ſaith, *Temptations are to be prevented by their contraries, as when ſuch a one is inclined to pride, he muſt be exerciſed in ſuch mean things as may likely help him towards* Humility, *and ſo in other ill inclinations.* And yet in another place; *As for mean and baſe imployments men ought readily to accept of thoſe wherein they find moſt repugnance, whenſoever they ſhall be ſo ordained.* So that, I ſay, theſe two things, *Humility* and *Humiliation* muſt help one another, and from the interiour Humility which conſiſts in the

ſpiſing himſelf, and deſiring to be held by others in ſmall account, exteriour Humiliation is to grow, that the man may exterioufly ſhew himſelf to be the ſame that interiourly he took himſelf to be. Namely, that as the humble man is interiourly contemptible in his own eyes, and holds himſelf to be unworthy of all honour, ſo he muſt treat himſelf alſo exteriourly; that the exteriour works which he performs, may viſibly declare the interiour *humility* which is in his heart. Chuſe you the loweſt place, as Chriſt our Lord adviſed; deſpiſe not to treat with perſons who are poor and mean, be glad of the moſt inferiour imployments; and this very exteriour Humiliation which ſprings from the interiour will give increaſe to that very Fountain alſo from which it ſprings.

CHAP. XXIII.

That we muſt take heed of ſpeaking any ſuch words as may redound to our own praiſe.

THe Saints and Maſters of ſpiritual life, St. *Baſil*, St. *Gregory*, St. *Bernard*,

nard, others alſo, adviſed us to take heed with great care of ſpeaking any words may redound to our own eſtimation or praiſe, according to that which holy *Tobias* counſelled his Son; *Never ſuffer pride to have dominion either over thy heart, or over thy words.* St. *Bernard* ponders that of St. *Paul* very well to this purpoſe: *But now I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.* The Apoſtle had formerly ſpoken great things of himſelf, and ſo it was fit at that time he ſhould do for the good of hearers, and for the greater glory of God; and he might yet have ſaid greater things ſince he had been rapt up into the third Heaven, where he had ſeen and underſtood more then the tongue could ſpeak, but I forbear, ſaith he, to ſpeak thereof, leſt otherwiſe any man ſhould think more then he ſees and hears of me.

St. *Bernard* ſaith, *O how well*, ſaid he, *I forbear that for this time.* The proud or arrogant man forbears not ſuch things, for he ſuffers no occaſion to paſſe, wherein he may magnifie himſelf: yea, and ſometimes he adds, and ſaith more then is, that ſo

so he may be esteemed the more. Only the man who is truly humble, lets these occasions passe: and to the end he may be sure, that they shall not ascribe more to him then that which is true, he conceals that which is true. The Saint descends more particularly into this subject, and saith, *you must not say any thing, whereby you may seem more learned, or to be a man of piety and prayer. And generally, you must take heed of saying any thing, which may redound in any kind to your own praise, for it is very dangerous, though you could say it with much truth, and though it may be matter of edification, and though you may think it to be to a good end, & for the profit of another, yet it suffices that it is to your own praise, to keep you from speaking it. You must ever walk with great care concerning this, least otherwise by this means you loose the good which perhaps you did.*

Bonaventure saith, *you must never speak words which may give others to understand that you have eminent parts, or that you were formerly of some account in the world.* It looks very illfavouredly in a religious man, to value himself by the Nobility and

riches of his friends, for all these pedegrees and states, are no better then a little wind: and as one asked, *Do you know for what Nobility is good?* the other answered very well, *To be dispised, as wealth is.* S. *Basil* saith, *He who is born again by new birth, and hath contracted a spiritual and divine kindred with God, and received a power to become his Son, grows ashamed of that other carnal kindred, and layes it utterly aside.* Whosoever the man be, words of praise sound ill out of his own mouth. And so the Proverb saith, *A mans praise in his own mouth is little worth, Prov. 27. 2.* And the *Wise-man* saith better, *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth: a stranger and not thine own lips.* But in the mouth of a religious man, they do much worse, as being so contrary to that which he professes, and so he grows to be slightly thought of and disesteemed by means of that very thing, whereby he meant to be honoured. St. *Ambrose* upon those words of the Prophet, *Behold O Lord, my humility, and deliver me*; saith, *That although a man be sick and poor, and of mean condition, yet if he grow not proud,*

nor

nor prefer himself before any other, By humility he makes himself to be esteemed, and be beloved. So that *humility* supplies all defects; And on the other side, though a man be very rich, and noble, and powerful: though he be very learned, and excel in abilities and good parts, yet if he boast thereof, and look big upon it, he lessens and abases himself, and grows to be disesteemed and despised, because he desires to be held proud.

The History of devout *Arsenius* reports, that although he had been so famous in the world, and so eminent in learning, for he had been the Instructer or Master of the Son of the Emperour *Theodosius*, and of *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, who also came both to be Emperours, yet no word was ever heard to fall from him, which might savour of greatnesse, or which gave to understand that he had learning, but he conversst and lived amongst his Brethren with so great *humility* and simplicity of heart, as if he had never known any thing; and he would also ask questions of others, concerning the most ordinary things of spiritual life, affirming that in this sublime science he deserved to be their Disciple. And

it is related of St. *Jerome*, that he was of moſt noble extraction, and yet we find not in all his works that he hath ſo much as inſinuated any thing thereof.

Bonaventure gives this reaſon againſt vanity, *Know that there can hardly be any good thing in you worthy of praiſe, which ſhines not to others, ſo that they may underſtand and know it; and if you uſe ſilence and conceal it, you ſhall gain more upon them, and be more worthy of praiſe, both for the vertue it ſelf, and for your hiding it; but if you will needs become the publiſher thereof, and will needs ſerve it out in a full diſh, they will make ſport at it; And whereas before they were edified, and you eſteemed, they will now vilifie and deſpiſe you.* Vertue is in this like muſk, which the more you hide it, the ſtronger ſmell it gives, but if you carry it open, it looſes his ſent.

CHAP. XXIV.

In what manner we ought to examine our conſciences concerning the vertue of Humility.

THe particular examination, (as hath been ſaid in it's proper place) is to be

be of ſome one only thing: for by this means it will be more efficatious, and have greater force then if we carried o're many things together, and it is therefore called particular, becauſe it concerns one only thing. And this is of ſo great importance, that ordinarily it is neceſſary to take many times one vice, which we would avoid, and one vertue which we would obtain, into parts, that ſo, by little and little, we may be able to compaſſe that which we deſire. So is it in this vertue. If you will make your particular examination about rooting up the pride of your heart, and of obtaining the vertue of Humility, you muſt not take it in hand after a kind of general way. For *humility* and *pride* imbrace many particulars, and if you take it in groſſe, and ſay, *I will be proud in nothing, but humble in all things*; it is too much to examine your ſelves upon at once: But you are to take it into parts, and to goe on by little and little. Conſider in what you are chiefly wont to fail concerning *Humility*, or in exerciſing of pride, and begin there, and having ended with one particular thing, take another to heart, and then another, and thus by little and little you

will goe rooting up the whole vice of pride out of your ſouls, planting the vertue of Humility in place thereof. Let us therefore part and divide theſe vices, that ſo we may the better, and with the more profit, make particular examination concerning this ſo neceſſary a vertue.

The firſt ſhall be not to ſpeak a word which may redound to our own eſtimation and praiſe. The mouth is wont to ſpeak, out of the abundance of the heart. As ſoon as any occaſion is offered, whereby honour may be gained, we inſtantly come in for our parts: as by ſaying *I was in place; I was partly the cauſe: If I had been abſent, I was intereſſed in that from the beginning*, &c.

And the while, I dare warrant you, that if the thing had not brought honour with it, you would have been content, to hold your peace, though you had been preſent, and partly had been the cauſe thereof.

The ſecond may be that which S. Bas adviſes us; namely, *That we be not willing to hear any praiſe or ſpeak well of us, for in this there is alſo great danger.* S. *Ambroſe* ſaith, *that when the devil cannot beat us down by puſillanimi-*

he blows us up by presumption and pride: when he cannot overthrow us by affronts, he makes us be honoured and praised, and so be undone by that means. S. *Jerome* saith, *Keep your selves safe from these Syrens, for they inchant men, and put them out of their wits.* *John Climacus* advises us, *when men praise us, to call our sins to mind, for so shall we draw more Humility and confusion from thence.* This may be the second thing, upon which you may particularly examine your selves: Namely, that you rejoyce not to be well spoken of, and praised by others.

And to this we may joyn the being glad when others are well spoken of and praised, which is a point of very great importance. Whensoever you find either any feeling or motion of envie for the praise of others, or else of any complacence or vain contentment in that others speak well of you; be sure to set it down for a fault.

The third thing is concerning the not doing of any thing, to the end that we may be seen, or esteemed by men. And this is that which Christ our Lord advises us, Mat. 6. 1. *Take heed that ye do not your alms,* (or righteousness as some copies have

have it) *before men, to be ſeen of them, otherwiſe ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* This is a very profitable examination, and may be divided into many parts. Firſt, it may be made upon the not doing of any thing for humane reſpects. Secondly, upon the doing things nicerly for the love of God. And thirdly, upon the doing them perfectly well, as one who doth them in the preſence of God, and as one who ſerves not men but God. And this diligence is to be uſed by us, till the works be performed by us in ſuch ſort, as we may rather ſeem to be loving God in them, then to be working of them.

The fourth point is, not to excuſe ourſelves. For this alſo grows from pride, when committing a fault, and being told of it, we inſtantly make our excuſe. S. *Gregory* upon theſe words of *Job*, *If as a man, I have hidden my ſin*, ponders theſe words very well: *Quaſi homo* as a man, and ſaith, *that it is the property of a man to deſire to cover and excuſe his ſin, becauſe it comes to us by deſcent from our firſt parents.* As ſoon as the firſt man had ſinned, he went inſtantly to hide himſelf among the trees

of

of Paradiſe, and God reproving him for his diſobedience, he thus excuſed himſelf preſently upon his wife, *O Lord, that Woman, whom thou gaveſt me for my companion, made me eat of the forbidden fruit.* And the Woman excuſed her ſelf in like manner upon the Serpent; *The Serpent deceived me, and I did eat thereof.* God examined them about their ſin, to the end that knowing it, and confeſſing it, they might obtain pardon for it: and ſo S. *Gregory* ſaith, that he did not examine the Serpent, becauſe he meant not to pardon the ſerpent. But they inſtead of humbling themſelves, and acknowledging their ſin towards the obtaining of pardon, increaſe and aggravate it by their excuſes: yea and by deſiring after a ſort, thus to caſt the fault upon God. *The woman whom thou gaveſt me, O Lord, was the cauſe.* As if he had ſaid; If thou hadſt not given her me for a companion, no part of this had been done. The Serpent which thou didſt create, and ſuffer to enter into Paradiſe, deceived me, and if thou hadſt not ſuffered it to enter there, I had not ſinned. S. *Gregory* ſaith, *that they having heard from the Devils mouth, that they ſhould be like*

God

God, ſince they could not become like him in the point of his Divinity, they endeavoured to makt him like them in the point of their ſin; and ſo they made it greater by defending it, then they had done by committing it. And now, as being children of ſuch parents, and as being men, we ſtill remain with this infirmity, and ill cuſtome, that when we are reproved for any fault, we inſtantly have an excuſe, as under boughes and leaves: yea and ſometimes a man is not content to excuſe himſelf, but he muſt needs be caſting the fault upon others. One compares ſuch as excuſe themſelves to the Hedge-hogge, which when ſhe perceives that they go about to take her, ſhe ſhrinks in her head and feet with extream ſpeed, and remains as a boul, being circled on every ſide as it were with thorns; ſo that a man cannot touch her without pricking himſelf firſt. So that you ſhall ſooner ſee your own bloud then her body. In this manner be they who are wont to excuſe themſelves. Nay there are ſome ſo unmortified in this kind, that even before you ſay any thing, they prevent you, and excuſe themſelves, and give reaſons for that which they think you may object; and

they

they ſay, *If I did this, it was for this reaſons; and if I did that, it was for that: and the like.* But who in the mean time pricks you now, that you muſt skip ſo high. The goad of pride it is which you carry ſo deeply rooted in your hearts. This is that which pricks you, and which makes you leap even before your time. It will therefore be well done by him who finds this old and ill cuſtome in himſelf, to examine himſelf particularly thereof; till at length he may come to part with all deſire of covering his faults, the rather ſince he committed them, let him be glad to be held faulty in ſhame and puniſhment of it; yea, and though you have made no fault, and they reprehend you as if you had, yet do not alwaies excuſe your ſelves.

The fifth is alſo very good; namely, the reſtraining and cutting off all thoughts of pride. A man is ſo proud and vain, that many idle and preſumptious thoughts will be ruſhing in upon him, and he will imagine himſelf to be in ſome high office, and performing of ſome great function. Already you fancie your ſelves to be preaching in the places where you were born, with great allowance and liking, and you imagine

gine that you produce great fruit. Already do you conceive that you are reading or diſputing againſt ſuch concluſions, with great applauſe of the hearers, and ſuch things as theſe. All this grows from our great pride which lies ſprouting and breaking out into theſe thoughts. And therefore it will be very well done, to make a particular examination upon the clipping and curting or theſe thoughts which are ſo haughty and vain. And ſo will it be fit ſo to ſtop, and inſtantly to cut off all impure thoughts and raſh judgements, or any other vice, whereby we may find our ſelves to be moleſted.

The ſixth point ſhall be, to carry a particular examination upon your ſelves, whether you eſteem of all men as your Superiors according to that rule of Humility, by procuring and deſiring to give the advantage to others, eſteeming them all from our very ſouls, as if they were our ſuperiours, and outwardly bearing them that reſpect and reverence, which the condition of every one of them ſhall bear with plainneſs and religious ſimplicity of heart: and this is alſo taken from the Apoſtle. And howſoever there is to be a difference amongſt

men

men according to the diſtinction of their perſons and places, yet for as much as may concern the inward Humility of our ſouls, every one of us muſt hold himſelf for the leaſt and loweſt, and muſt hold all others for his ſuperiours and betters. This ſhall therefore be a very good and profitable examination: but yet ſo, as that it be not only ſpeculative, but that in the exerciſe and practiſe thereof, we carry our ſelves ſo towards all, with all Humility and reſpect, as if they were our ſuperiours.

The ſeventh thing upon this ſubject is, whether we make good uſe of all thoſe occaſions which offer themſelves towards the getting of *Humility*. Are you troubled when another ſpeaks ſome little word to you, which you would not hear, or when they command any thing in too reſolute and imperious manner, or when you think they make not ſo much account of you as of others? Examine your ſelves whether you make good uſe of theſe, as alſo thoſe other occaſions, which ſometimes repreſent themſelves redounding to your diſeſtimation. This is one of the moſt profitable examinations, which we can uſe towards the obtaining of the vertue of *Humility*. For beſides

sides that we shall thus provide our selves for all those things which may daily occurrre, and whereof we may stand in need; we may by means of this examination encrease and rise up by those three degrees of vertue, which we set down before. First, you may examine whether or no you carry all these things with patience. Secondly, whether you carry them with so much promptitude and facility, as that they put you to no trouble. And thirdly, whether you carry them with joy and taking pleasure in the contempt of your self, for in this we shewed before, that the perfection of *humility* doth consist.

The eighth point upon which a man particularly examines himself, either in this subject, or others like it, is to make some acts or exercises, as well interiour as exteriour of *humility*, or any other vertue, about which he examines himself, meditating upon it so many times in the morning, and so many in the evening, beginning with fewer acts, and so rising up to more, till at length he get the habit and custome of that vertue. And now the enemies being divided after this manner, and we taking every one of them by himself, they will the more easily

eaſily be overcome, and the victory which is deſired will be the more ſpeedily obtained.

CHAP. XXV.

How it may be compatible with Humility, to be accounted of by men.

THere is a doubt wont to be propounded concerning Humility, the ſolution whereof doth much import us, that ſo we may know how to carry our ſelves therein. We ordinarily ſay, and it is the general Doctrine of the Saints, that we muſt deſire to be abaſed, diſeſteemed, and deſpiſed, that men may hold us in no account. But then it comes to be conſidered on the other ſide, how we ſhall be able to gather fruit by the good of our Neighbours, if they diſeſteem and deſpiſe us: for to that end it is neceſſary that we have a kind of credit with them, and that they may hold us in good opinion and eſtimation: and therefore it may ſeem that it ſhall not be ill, but good that we deſire to be valued and eſteemed by men. S. *Baſil*, S. *Gregory*, and S. *Ber-*

S. *Bernard* treat upon this doubt very well, and say, *that although it be true, that we must flie from the honour & estimation of the world, by reason of the great danger which is therein, and that, for as much as is on our part, and for that which may concern our selves, we must ever desire to be disesteemed and despised, yet for some good end of the greater service of God, the honour and estimation of the world may lawfully and piously be desired.* And S. *Bernard* saith also, *that for as much as concerns our part, we must wish that men may think and esteem of us as we think and esteem of our selves, that so they may value us as our selves.* But yet he saith withall, *that it is not fit many times, that others should be sure thereof, and so therefore that we may sometimes even lawfully procure that they may not know our faults, lest so themselves may receive hurt thereby, through the hindrance of their own spiritural good.* But it will be necessary that we understand this point very well, and that we walk therein with great caution, because such truths as this, instead of doing good, do many times much hurt to some who know not how to make right use there-

of.

of. The Saints themſelves declare this Doctrine very well, that ſo we may not take occaſion of errour from thence. S. *Gregory* ſaith, *Sometimes, even holy men are glad that they have good opinion and eſtimation amongſt men; but this happens when they find that it is a neceſſary means, for the doing good, and giving help to their Neighbours ſouls; and this is not to rejoyce at his own credit or eſtimation, but for the fruit and good of his Neighbours*; which is a very different caſe. It is one thing for a man to love humane honour for his own reſpect and contentment, that ſo he may grow great; and this is naught: but another thing when this is liked for ſome good end, and this is not ill but good, and thus we may well deſire eſtimation of the world, that they may have a good conceit of us, for the greater glory of God, and becauſe it may be neceſſary for the edification of our Neighbours and for the benefit of their ſouls. For thus a man ſhall not rejoyce in his own honour, but in the ſpiritual good of others, and the greater glory of Almighty God. And as he who for his health deſires to take a purge, which he naturally abhorrs, may well ſay, that to admit and

like

like the purge, is to love his health, so he who admits, and likes humane honour, which otherwise he despises, (only because in that case it is a necessary, or at least a profitable means for the service of God, & the good of souls) may affirm with truth, that he desires and likes nothing in it, but the glory of almighty God.

But let us now consider, how we may know whether a man delight in honour and estimation, for the meer glory of God and the good of his Neighbours, or else for his own sake, and for the affection which he bears to his own honour: for this indeed is a nice point wherein the whole difficulty of this business consists. S. *Gregory* answered thus; *Our being glad of honour and estimation is to be so meerly for God, that when it is not necessary for his greater glory, and the good of souls, not only we are not to rejoyce therein, but to be troubled at it.* By this you shall therefore know if you be glad of honour and estimation for the good of souls, and the glory of God, or else for your own honour and fame: If when any occasion of *humility* and contempt is offered, you imbrace it in good earnest, and with the heart; and

if

if you rejoyce thereat, it is then a good ſign; that when ſuch a Sermon, or ſuch another imployment hath ſucceeded well, and that you are valued and eſteemed for it, you rejoyce not for your own honour and eſtimation, but meerly for the glory of God, and the good of ſouls which grows thereby. But when on the other ſide ſome occaſion of *humility* is offered, and you reject it: this indeed is a ſign that you are glad for a thing which hath relation to your ſelf and your own eſtimation and honour, and not meerly for the glory of God, and the good of ſouls.

So that it is true, that the honour and eſtimation of men is not ill but good, if we uſe it rightly, and it may lawfully and vertuouſly be deſired. Yea even a mans praiſing himſelf, may be holy and good, if it be done as it ought. And ſo we ſee that S. *Paul* writing to them of *Corinth*, began to praiſe and recount great things of himſelf, relating the high favours which our Lord had imparted to him, ſaying; *That he had laboured more then the reſt of the Apoſtles: yea, and he began to tell them of his Revelations, and rapture, whereby he had been carried up to the third Heaven.*

But

But all this he did becauſe it was convenient, yea neceſſary for the glory of God, and good of them to whom he wrote, that ſo they might grow to hold and value him for an Apoſtle of Chriſt, and embrace his Doctrine, and take benefit thereby: and he ſpoke theſe things of himſelf with a heart which did not only deſpiſe honour, but love diſhonour for the love of Chriſt our Lord, and when his honour was not neceſſary for the good of others, he knew very well how to empty and abaſe himſelf, ſaying, *That he was not worthy to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe he had perſecuted the Church of God*; and ſtiling himſelf blaſphemous, and abortive, and the greateſt of ſinners; and when occaſions of diſhonour and contempt were preſented to him, therein was his contentment and joy. Such hearts as theſe we may well truſt with receiving honour, and with ſaying ſometimes ſuch things as may conduce towards it; becauſe they will never do it, but when it may be neceſſary for the greater glory of God; yea and even then they do it without ſticking of any part thereof to themſelves, as if they had not done it at all; for they love not their own honour, but the

honour

honour of Almighty God, and the good of souls.

But because it is a matter of much difficulty to receive honour, and not to grow proud by it, nor to take any vain contentment, or complacence therein: therefore the Saints through their fear of the great danger which lurks in estimation and dignity, and high places, fled as far as they could from it, and they busied themselves in mean and contemptible imployments, because they saw that they profited thereby in Humility, which was the most secure way for them. One said very well, *I am not a religious man, If I take not dishonour with the same both inward and outward joy, wherewith I take honour. For if I joy at that honour which others allow me, when I preach or perform any other office of charity to them, for their good: (whereby yet I put my soul to run some hazard, through the danger of vanity) much more ought I joy in mine own soul, which I preserve with more security, when I am scorned.* And it is evident that we are more obliged to joy in our own good and profit, then in that of others, because *charity well ordered begins at home.* If then you joy in

the good of our Neighbour, when the Sermon, or other imployment hath succeeded well, and when you are esteemed and praised for it, why should you not be glad of your own good, when you having done what was in you, are yet undervalued for your pains, for this is better, and more safe for you? If you be glad when you have a great talent, wherewith to do great things for the good of others, why are you not glad of your own good? If you be glad when you have much health and strength, wherewith to labour for the good of others, why should you not be glad when God is pleased that you should be sick and weak, and be fit for nothing but to be laid in a corner, and without use: for this is your profit, and this will help you more towards *humility*, and in this shall you please God more, then if you were a great Preacher, or a wise and active States-man, since his Will is so.

Hereby it may be seen, how much deceived they are, who have lodged their eye upon honour, and the estimation of the world under colour, forsooth, that it is necessary for the doing good to others: and under this pretence, they desire high places

and honourable imployments, and all that looks like greatneſſe. But in this is another deceit, and a very great one, that by the very thing, whereby a man pretends to gain authority, he looſeth it, and by that whereby he thought to looſe it, he ſhall gain it.

But now laying this laſt reaſon aſide, which is the chief, and to conſider the thing in queſtion, by the way of prudence, and humane reaſon, you cannot employ a more efficatious means to gain authority, and opinion amongſt your Neighbours, and to do good to ſouls, then to exerciſe your ſelves in thoſe things which ſeem poor and baſe, ſuch as are to Catechize Children in a low way of ſhort queſtions and anſwers, to teach or to ſee them taught the firſt principles of Religion and manners, daily to viſit the ſick, the poor and ignorant, and humbly and kindly to inſtruct, comfort, and quicken them, as occaſion is offered.) and to do theſe things ſo much the more, by how much the more your parts are greater. The reaſon of this is, becauſe the world doth ſo hugely eſteem of honour and eſtimation, and of things which are high, in order to that end, as that the thing of the

whole world, which it admires moſt, is the man who deſpiſes that, and to ſee that one who might be uſed in high and honourable imployments, doth chuſe to paſſe his hours in things that are poor & mean: and thus they grow to frame a great conceit and eſtimation of the ſanctity of ſuch perſons, and accept of that Doctrine which they teach, as if it came immediately to them from Heaven.

This is that kind of Authority, whereof men have need, that ſo they may be able to do good to ſouls: this is the eſtimation and opinion which follows humble men, and belongs to Saints, and Eccleſiaſtical Preachers; & this in a word, is that which we are to perform. For as for other Authorities, Reputations, and Punctillios, which carry a ſmack and ſavour of the world with them, they do great hurt, and diſedifie our Neighbours very much.

Upon thoſe words of S. *John*, *I ſeek not mine own glory; there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth*, *Jo.* 8. 50. A Doctour very well ſaith, thus: *Since our Heavenly Father procures and ſeeks our honour and glory, we have no need to take care thereof. Take you care to humble your ſelves, and*

to be ſuch as ye ought, & as for any ſuch eſtimation and authority, whereof you think you may have need for the good of ſouls, leave that to God, for even whereby you ſhall moſt humble and abaſe your ſelves, thereby will God raiſe you moſt, and indue you with another manner of eſtimation in the world, then that which you would ever be able to obtain for your ſelves, by theſe other humane deviſes.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the third degree of Humility.

THe third degree of *Humility*, is when a man poſſeſſing great vertues and gifts of God, and being in great honour and eſtimation, grows not at all proud thereby, nor attributes any thing to himſelf, but aſcribes all to the true fountain thereof, which is God, from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds. *This third degree of Humility*, (ſaith *Bonaventure*) *belongs to high and perfect men: and by how much higher they are, ſo much the more low do they humble themſelves.* That

a man who is imperfect and faulty ſhould know and eſteem himſelf for ſuch, is no great matter. It is commendable and good, but it is no wonderful thing any more then it is for the ſon of a Plough-man doth to deſire to be held for the King's ſon; or a poor man for poor, or a ſick man for ſick, and that others may hold them for ſuch as they know themſelves to be: but that a rich man ſhould account himſelf poor, and the great man make himſelf little, and ſo conform himſelf to mean perſons, this indeed deſerves to be accounted ſtrange. He who is mightily advanced in vertue, and poſſeſſes many gifts of God, and is really very great in his divine preſence, ſhould yet hold himſelf for little, this indeed is great Humility, and worth the wondring at. S. *Bernard* ſaith, *A rare vertue it is, that a man ſhould do great things, and yet not hold himſelf for great; that he ſhould be admirable in the eyes of others, and contemptible in his own. I eſteem this more*, ſaith he, *then all other vertues.*

This *Humility* was found after a moſt perfect manner, in the moſt *Bleſſed Virgin*, who knowing that ſhe was choſen for the Mother of God, did acknowledge her ſelf with

with moſt profound *Humility*, to be his ſervant. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord* (ſaith S. *Bernard*) *God having choſen her to ſo great an honour, and for ſo high a dignity, as to be his Mother; ſhe calls her ſelf his ſervant.* And being celebrated by the mouth of S. *Elizabeth*, for bleſſed amongſt all women, ſhe aſcribed not to her ſelf any glory, for all theſe greatneſſes which were in her; but ſaid, *My ſoul doth magnifie the Lord, my ſpirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the lowlineſs of his Handmaid.* This is the very Humility of Heaven, the Saints poſſeſſe this humility. And this (ſaith S. *Gregory*) is that which S. *John* ſaw, in the Apocalypſe, of thoſe four and twenty Elders, that caſting off their Crowns, at the foot of the throne of God, ſignifies the not attributing their Victories to themſelves, but the aſcribing all to God, who gave them ſtrength, and power to overcome. *It is reaſon, O Lord, that we give the honour and glory of all to thee, and that we take off the crowns from our heads, and that we caſt them at thy feet, becauſe all is thine, and by thy will is made: and if we have any thing good, it is*

becauſe thou wouldſt have it ſo. This is then the third degree of *Humility*, when a man aſcribes not theſe gifts and graces to himſelf, which he hath received of God: but to refer them all to him as to the author and giver of all good gifts.

But ſome man may ſay, if humility conſiſts in this, we all are humble; for who is there who knows not, that all good comes to us from God, and that of our ſelves we are nothing but miſery, and ſin. Who is he that will not ſay, if God ſhould take his hand off from me, I were the moſt miſerable man of the whole world. *On our part we have nothing but deſtruction and ſinne*, ſaith the Prophet *Hoſea*. All the favour, and all the good comes to us from the liberality of God, and this is Catholick doctrine: and ſo it may ſeem that we all have this Humility; for we all believe this truth, whereof the holy Scripture is full. S. *James* in his Canonical Epiſtle, ſaith, *All good and perfect gifts, come to us from above, from the Father of lights.* And S. *Paul* ſaith, that we cannot work, nor ſpeak, nor deſire, nor think, nor begin, nor finiſh any thing, which may ſerve for our ſalvation, without God, from whom all

our

our ſufficiencie proceeds. And by what more clear compariſon could it be given us to underſtand all this, than by that which Chriſt our Lord himſelf declares? *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit*, for *without me ye can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. What is more fruitfull than the branch, united to the vine? and what more unprofitable, and uſeleſſe, than the branch parted from the vine? For what is it good? God interrogates the Prophet *Ezekiel: What O Son of man ſhall be done with the branch of the vine?* It is not timber which is fit for any Carpenters work, nor yet for any ſtake, or pin whereupon any thing may be hanged againſt a wall. The branch ſevered from the vine, is fit for nothing, but the fire. Now juſt ſo, are we, if we be not united to the true vine, which is Chriſt our Lord. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned*, Joh. 15. 6. If we be any thing, it is by the grace of God, as S. *Paul* ſaith, *By the grace of God I am what I am*, 1 Corinth. 15. 10. All men are fully

ly satisfied with the truth of this: and that we are to ascribe no good to our selves, but all to God, to whom the honour and glory of all is due; and therefore since it is so clear a point of Faith, it should be set down for the most perfect degree of *Humility*.

It seems easie at the first sight, if we look superficially upon it; but indeed it is very hard. *Cassian* saith, *that to such as are but beginners, it seems to be but an easie thing, to attribute nothing to a man's self, but to refer and ascribe all to God; but indeed it is very hard.* For since we also contribute somewhat on our part, towards good works, as S. *Paul* saith, because we also work and concur jointly with God, we grow tacitly, and even as it were without finding it, to confide in our selves: and a secret presumption and pride steals upon us, which makes us think, that this or that was done by our diligence and care; and so by degrees, we grow vain, and ascribe the works which we do to our selves, as if they had been wholly ours. This may suffice, that the Saints set this down, for the most perfect degree of *Humilitie*, and they say this is the *Humilitie* of the great one-

For a man to receive great gifts from God, and to do great things, and to give God the glory of all, without attributing any thing to himself, is a point of great perfection. To be honoured and praised for a Saint, and that no part of such honour should stick at all to the heart, any more than if he had done nothing, is a very hard thing, and there are few who attain to it, and there is need of much virtue for the performance thereof.

S. *Chrysostome* saith, *That to converse in the midst of honour, and not to be at all touch thereby, is like conversing much with beautifull women, and yet never to look upon them with unchast eyes.* It is a difficult, and a dangerous thing, and a man had need of much virtue therein: For a man to climbe high, and not to be giddy, he had need be Master of a good head; All men have not an head, wherewith to walk on high: The Angels of Heaven, *Lucifer*, and his Consorts had it not; and so they grew giddy, and proud, and fell down into the bottomlesse pit of Hell. For this they say was the sin of Angels, that when God created them so beautifull, and had enriched them with so many, both natu-

ral,

ral, and supernatural gifts, they remained not in God, nor gave him the glory of all, but would needs subsist in themselves; and yet not as conceiving, that of themselves they had these things (for they knew well, that they all came from God, and that they depended upon him, since they knew they were his creatures) but as the Prophet *Ezekiel* saith, *They grew proud in their beauty, and glorified themselves in those gifts, which they had received of God, and took delight in them*; as if they had possessed them of themselves, and did not give him the honour and glory thereof. Although with their Understanding, they knew that the glory thereof was due to God, yet with their Will they robbed him of it, and took it to themselves. You see then that this degree of *Humilitie*, is not so easie, as it seemed, since the Angels found it so hard, that they fell from that height wherein God had placed them, because they knew not how to conserve themselves therein. And now if the Angels fell down, much more reason have we to fear, least we may fall, when we are raised and and exalted, because we men are so miserable creatures, that as the Prophet *David* saith,

ſaith, *We vaniſh even like ſmoak.* As ſmoak, the higher it goes, the more it ſcatters, and diſſolves it ſelf: So man, who is ſo miſerable and ſo proud, the more he is honoured, and raiſed up to high eſtate, the more idle and intoxicated he grows.

O how well did Chriſt our Lord admoniſh us of this. The holy Goſpel relates, that having ſent his ſeventy two Diſciples to preach, they returned to him full of joy, and being, as it were proud of their miſſion, they ſaid thus to him, *Lord we have done wonderfull things, yea, and the very Devils themſelves have obeyed us in thy Name.* But the Saviour of the World anſwered them thus with great ſeverity, *Luk.* 10.18. *I beheld Satan as Lightning fall from Heaven.* Take heed of vain contentment in your ſelves; know that *Lucifer* fell down from Heaven, becauſe in that high ſtate wherein he was created he was vainly pleaſed with himſelf, and with thoſe gifts and graces which he had received, and did not aſcribe all to the honour and glory of Almighty God, as he ought, but would needs take it to himſelf. Take heed the like happen not to you; grow not vain by reaſon of the great and wonderfull things

things which you do in my Name, and take no vain contentment in them. Now these words may also suit with us. Take heed you wax not proud, in that great things are done by you, for the good of others, and that many souls are gained by your means. Take heed you have no contentment in the applause and opinion of men, and in the much account they make of you. Be sure you take nothing to your selves, and suffer not the love of honour and estimation, to stick at all to your hearts, for this is that which cast *Lucifer* down to hell, and that which of an Angel made him a Devil. *You may see* (saith S. *Augustine*) *how detestable a thing* Pride *is, since it makes Angels Devils; and on the other side, how excellent a thing* Humility *is, since it makes men become Angels.*

CHAP. XXVII.

It is declared wherein the third degree of Humility consists.

WE have not yet sufficiently declared wherein the third degree of *Humility*

lity consists; and therefore it will be fit to go on, that so we may the better put it in practice, this being the thing at which we aim. The Saints affirm, That the third degree of *Humility* consists in knowing how to distinguish between the gold of the Graces and benefits which comes to us from God, and the drosse or misery wherewith we abound in our selves, and then to give every one his due: to God, that which is his, to our selves that which is ours; For *Humility* doth not consist in knowing speculatively, that of our selves, we are good for nothing, and can effect nothing, and that all good things come to us from God, and that it is he who works the willing, the beginning, and the ending in us, through his free and gracious will, as S. *Paul* declares; for onely to know this speculatively is a very easie thing, and all true Christians know and believe it; but to know and exercise it, in the way of practice, and to be so grounded and setled in it, as if we saw it with our eyes, and touch't it, and took it into our hands; *This* (as S. *Ambrose* saith) *is a most particular grace, and high favour of Almighty God:* to prove this he brings that passage of S. *Paul*, *We*

have

have not received the ſpirit of this World, but the Spirit of God, to the end that we may know and feel the gifts which we have received from his hand. For a man to acknowledge, and even feel the graces which he hath received from God, ſo purely, as to eſteem them as meerly anothers, and to have been imparted, and to be enjoyed by the meer liberality and mercy of Almighty God, is a moſt particular favour and gift of his: And the wiſe *Solomon* ſaith, that *this is ſupreme Wiſdome*. To underſtand and know practically, that to be continent, is not a thing which we are able to compaſſe by our own ſtrength; and that no induſtry or endeavour of our own, is able to obtain it; but that it is the gift of God, and that we muſt have it from his hand, is a point of ſupreme wiſdome: So that in this which S. *Paul* ſaith is a particular grace, and gift of God; and which *Solomon* calls ſupreme Wiſdome, conſiſts this third degree of *Humility*. *What have we, which we have not received; it was none of ours, for of our ſelves we have no good thing*; and if we have received it, and that if it were anothers, and none of ours, why doe we glory, as if we had not received

ceived it, and as if it were properly our own.

This was the *Humility* of the Saints, who with being enriched by the gifts, and graces of Almighty God, and with his having raiſed them up to the very top of perfection, and thereby to honour and eſtimation, even in this world, have notwithſtanding held themſelves for vile and baſe in their own eyes, and their ſouls remained ſo deeply fixed in the knowledge of their own meanneſs, and miſery, as if they had poſſeſſed no ſuch graces at all. There ſtuck not the leaſt vanity to their hearts, nor any air at all of that honour, & eſtimation, wch the world gave them; for they knew well, how to diſtinguiſh between their own, and that of others, and ſo they lookt upon all thoſe gifts, graces, honour, and eſtimation, as things extrinſecal to themſelves, and received from the hand of God; and to him they aſcribed, and gave all the glory, and praiſe thereof. And from thence it alſo came, that though the whole World exalted them, they would never yet exalt themſelves, nor eſteem themſelves one jot the more for that, nor did any little breach thereof ſtick to their hearts, but that theſe

praiſes

praiſes did belong to God, in whom and in whoſe glory they placed all their contentment, and joy. And thus it is affirmed with much reaſon, that this is the *Humility* of great and perfect men. Firſt, becauſe it already preſuppoſes great virtue, and great gifts of God, which onely make one great in his ſight; and ſecondly, becauſe in it ſelf, for a man to be truly great in the ſight of God, and very eminent in virtue, and perfection, and for that reaſon to be highly valued and eſteemed, both before God and man, and yet in the midſt of all this, to hold himſelf for little & baſe in his own eyes, is a great and admirable perfection. And this is that which S. *Chryſoſtome* and S. *Bernard* do ſo much wonder at in the Apoſtles, and others, who with being ſo great Saints, and ſo richly full of graces from God, and his Majeſty working ſuch wonders and miracles by their means, ſo far as even to raiſe the dead to life, and being ſo highly eſteemed for theſe things, by the whole world, they yet nevertheleſſe remained ſo fixed in their unworthineſſe, as if they had nothing in them, and as if it had been ſome other, and not they, who wrought thoſe great things, and as if all

that

that honour, and eſtimation, and praiſe were belonging to others. S. *Bernard* ſaith, *It is not much that a man in poverty ſhould humble himſelf; for that which indeed he is, helps him to know, and diſeſteem himſelf; but that a man ſhould be generally honoured and eſteemed for an admirable man, and for a Saint, and yet remain ſo well grounded in the truth of his own vileneſſe, and of his nothing, as if no part of thoſe other things, were in him;* this indeed is a rare and excellent vertue, and a point of moſt high perfection. *In ſuch men* (ſaith S. *Bernard*) *doth the light ſhine, according to the Commandement of our Lord, not for the glorifying of themſelves, but of their Father who is in Heaven.* Theſe are thoſe true imitators of S. *Paul*, and of the Preachers of the Goſpel, who publiſh not themſelves, but Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe are thoſe good and faithful ſervants who ſeek no advantage of their own, nor aſcribe any thing to themſelves, but all and that moſt faithfully to God, to whom they give the glory of all. And ſo ſhall they be ſure to hear from the mouth of our Lord, thoſe words of the Goſpel, *Rejoyce thou, O good and faithful ſervant,*

for

for becauſe thou haſt been faithful in little, I will appoint and place thee over much.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The foreſaid Truth is further declared.

WE have ſaid that the third degree of Humility, is when a man having great vertues, and gifts of God, and withall being in great honour and eſtimation with the world, grows not proud thereof; but attributes and aſcribes all to the fountain thereof, which is God, giving him the glory of all, himſelf remaining the while in his own unworthineſſe and vileneſſe, as if he did nothing, nor had nothing. But we ſay not for all this, that we do not new work, or we have not a part in thoſe good works which we do, for this were a great ignorance and errour.

Nay rather, this is that which makes this degree of Humility ſo very hard to be obtained: for on the one ſide, we are to uſe all our diligences, and imploy all the means we can to obtain vertue; & to reſiſt temptations, and to procure that all things may ſucceed

ſucceed well, as if theſe things alone were able to effect it; and on the other ſide, when all this is done, we are to diſtruſt our ſelves as much, and hold our ſelves for as unprofitable, as if God had done nothing at all, and we muſt place our whole confidence in God, as the holy Goſpel teaches: *When you have done all thoſe things which are commanded you*, (he ſpeaks not of ſome, but of all) *I ſay that you are unprofitable ſervants*; and to ſay this right, you will have need of ſome vertue, and not a little. *Caſſianus* ſaith, *That he who comes to know well that he is an unprofitable ſervant, and that all his own endeavours and diligences, are not able to obtain any one good thing, but that all is to flow from the gracious gifts of Almighty God, this man will not grow proud when he prevails in any thing, which he obtained not by his own labour, but by the grace and goodneſs of God.* Which is alſo the ſame that S. *Paul* ſaith, *What haſt thou, which thou haſt not received.*

S. *Auguſtine* brings a very good compariſon to declare this truth; and ſaith, *That without the grace of God, we are no more, but meerly a body without a ſoul.*

So

So that as a body which is dead cannot move or ſtir it ſelf, ſo we without the grace of God, cannot perform the works of life, or value in the ſight of God. So that as that body were a mad kind of thing, which ſhould aſſume the acts of living and moving to it ſelf, and not aſcribe it to the ſoul which dwells in it, and gives it life, ſo were that ſoul to be ſtark blind, which doth attribute the good works which it doth to it ſelf, and not to God, who infuſed into it the ſpirit of life, which is his grace; to the end that ſo he might be able to perform them. And in another place he ſaith, *that as our corporal eyes, though they be never ſo ſharp ſighted, yet if they be not aſſiſted by the light of the Sun, can diſcern nothing; ſo a man, how much ſoever he may be juſtified, cannot ſo much as continue to live well, if he be not enabled by the light of Gods grace. If our Lord keep not the City*, ſaith the Prophet *David, in vain doth he watch who keeps it.* O, ſaith the Saint, that men would at length know themſelves, and confeſſe that they have nothing in themſelves, whereof to glory, but only in Almighty God. O that God would ſend us ſome beam of light

light from heaven, whereby we might apprehend, & understand our own darkness: and that there is no good, nor being, nor strength in any thing which ever was created, but only so far forth as our Lord hath been graciously pleased to give it, and is still pleased to continue it. Now in this doth the third degree of humility consist, saving that no poor words of ours can arrive to expresse the profundity and great perfection which is therein, notwithstanding all that which we can say, sometimes after one manner, and sometimes after another: and not only is the practice hereof hard, but even the speculation also.

This is that annihilation of a mans self, which is so often repeated and recommended by the masters of spiritual life, which is set down for the most perfect degree of Humility. This is that distrust of a mans self, and that being still depending upon God, which is so recommended to us in holy Scripture. This is that holding himself in no account at all, wherefore we are ever talking and hearing. But O that we might finde it once in our very hearts. That we might understand it in very truth, and practically as a man, who sees things with his eyes and touches and feels them with his

his hand, that forasmuch as is on our part we neither have any thing but misery, nor can do any thing but commit sin; and that all the good which we effect or work, we neither exercise it, nor have it of our selves, but only of God; and that the honour and glory of all is his.

And having said all this, you yet understand not fully the perfection of this degree of *humility*, do not wonder at it; for this is a very high piece of Divinity; and therefore it is not strange, though it be not so easily understood. A certain Doctour saith very well, *That it happens in all arts and sciences, that every body arrives to know such things as are common and plain, but as for such others as are curious and choice, they are not to be reached by every hand, but by such only as are eminent in that science or art.* And just so it is in our case; for the ordinary and usual things belonging to any vertue, are understood by all the world; but such as are extraordinary, and choice, and nice, and high, can only be comprehended by such as are eminent, and fully possessed of that vertue. And this is that which *Laurentius Justinianus* saith, namely, *That no man knows well*

well what humility *is*, *but he who hath received the gift of being humble from God.* Hence is it that the Saints were indued with such a most profound Humility, that they thought, and said such things of themselves that we who fall so far short of them, cannot understand exactly what they say: but their speeches seem exaggerations, as namely that they were the greatest sinners of the whole world, and the like, whereof I will speak ere long. But if we cannot say or think such things as they, no nor even understand them, it is because we have not arrived to so great *Humility* as theirs was, and so we understand not the curious and subtil parts of this faculty. Be humble, and grow up in this science, and profit therein more and more, and then you will understand how such things as those may be said with truth.

CHAP. XXIX.

This third degree of Humility is further declared,

THat we may yet better understand this third degree of *Humility*, and

may ground our ſelves well therein; it will be neceſſary for us to go back, and take up the matter nearer the fountain. And as according to what we ſaid before all our natural being, & all the natural operations which we have, we have from God, becauſe we were nothing, and then we had no power either to move our ſelves, or to ſee, or hear, or taſte, or underſtand, or will: but God who gave us our natural being, gave us theſe faculties and powers, and we muſt aſcribe our being, as alſo theſe natural operations to him; ſo in the ſelf-ſame manner, and with much greater reaſon muſt we ſay; in the caſe of a ſupernatural being, and of the works of grace, and that ſo much more as theſe are greater, and more excellent than thoſe. We have not our ſupernatural being of our ſelves, but of God. In fine it is a being of favour and grace, and therefore it is ſo called, becauſe out of his meer goodneſſe, he added that to our natural being, *Epheſ.* 2. 3. We were born in ſin, we were the children of wrath, and the enemies of God, who drew us out of that darkneſſe, into his admirable light, as S. *Peter* ſaith, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *Of enemies, God made us friends*; *ſlaves*

Loves, Sons; from being nothing worth, he brought us to be acceptable in his own ſight. And the cauſe why God did all this, was not for any reſpect either of our merits paſt, or ſervices to come; but only for his own bounty & mercy, and through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our only Lord and Saviour, as S. *Paul* ſaith, *Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.* Now then, as we were not able to get out of that nothing wherein we were, into the natural being which now we have, nor were able to perform the acts of life, nor ſee, nor hear, nor feel, but all this was the gracious gift of God, and to him we muſt aſcribe it all, without taking the glory of it to our ſelves; ſo could we never have gone out of that darkneſſe of ſin wherein we were, and in which we were conceived and born, if God of his infinite goodneſſe and mercy had not drawn us out from thence; nor could we now perform the works of ſpiritual life, if he gave us not his grace to that end. For the vertue and worth of good works grows not from that part thereof, wch they have from us, but from what they have from the grace of our *Lord*; juſt ſo as the legal value

which currant money hath, it hath not from it ſelf, but from the ſtamp or coyn. And therefore we muſt not aſcribe any glory at all to our ſelves, but all to God, from whom both our natural and ſupernatural *Being* is derived; carrying ever that of S. *Paul* both in our mouthes, and in our hearts; *I am whatſoever I am, by the meer grace of God.*

But now, according to what we ſaid, God not only drew us out of our nothing, & gave us that *Being* which now we have, but after we are created, and have received our *Being*, we do not ſubſiſt in our ſelves, but God is ever ſuſtaining, upholding, and conſerving us with his hand of power, that ſo we may not fall into that former profound Abiſs of nothing, from whence he took us before. In the ſame manner is it alſo in our ſupernatural *Being*; for not only did God ſhew us the favour to bring us out of the darkneſſe of ſin, wherein we were, into the admirable light of his grace; but he is ever conſerving and holding us up with his hand, that ſo we may not return to fall. And this, to ſuch a proportion as that if God ſhould take off his hand & cuſtody from us but for one minute, and ſhould give the Devil leave to tempt us a

hi

his pleaſure; we ſhould return both to our former and to greater ſins; ſaid the Prophet *David*, *Thou O Lord, art ever at my ſide holding me up, that I may not be pluckt down; it is my work, O Lord, to have ever raiſed me up from ſin; thine to have kept me from returning to ſin again. If I roſe up, it was becauſe thou gaveſt me thy hand; and if now I be on foot, it is becauſe thou holdeſt me from dropping down.*

Since therefore, as we ſhewed it before to be ſufficient to make us hold our ſelves for nothing, becauſe on our part we are nothing, we were nothing, and we ſhould be nothing, if God were not ever conſerving us: ſo this is alſo ſufficient to make us ever keep our ſelves in the account of being wicked ſinners, becauſe, foraſmuch as is on our part, we are ſinners, we were ſinners, and we would be ſinners, if God were not ſtill upholding us with his holy hand. *Albertus Magnus* ſaith, that *Whoſoever would obtain* Humility, *muſt plant the root thereof in his heart, which conſiſts in that he know his own weakneſſe and miſery, and underſtand and weigh not only how vile and wretched he is now, but how vile and wretched he may be; yea, and would be*

even very now, if God with his powerfull hand, did not keep him and sin asunder: and did not remove the occasions, and assist and strengthen him in temptations. O how many sins had I fallen, if thou O Lord through thy infinite mercy hadst not kept me up? how many occasions of my sinning hast thou prevented, which were sufficient to have pulled me down, as they pulled down the Prophet *David*; if thou knowing my weakneſſe, if thou I say, hadst not hindred them? How many times hast thou tied the devils hands, to the end that he might not tempt me at his pleasure, and if he would tempt me, that yet he should not be able to overcome me? How often might I have said those words of the Prophet with much truth; *If thou, O Lord, hadst not holpen me, this soul of mine had already been little less then in the very bottom of Hell.* How often have I been assaulted, and even almost tripped up towards falling: and thou, O Lord, didst hold me, and didst apply thy sweet and strong hand, that I might take no hurt. *Psal.* 94. 18. *If I said that my foot slipt, thy mercy, O Lord, came to help me.* O how often should we have been lost, If God (through his infinite

infinite mercy and goodneſſe) had not preſerved us? This is then the account wherein we are to hold our ſelves: becauſe this we are, and this we poſſeſſe on our parts, and this we were, and this we ſhould alſo be again, if God took off his hand & cuſtody from us.

From hence it is that theSaints deſpiſed, humbled, and confounded themſelves ſo far, that they were not content to eſteem little of themſelves, and to hold that they were wicked, and ſinfull men; but they thought themſelves the meaneſt of all others, yea and the moſt unworthy, and ſinfull men in theWorld. The ſame did S. *Paul* affirm touching himſelf, *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt came into this World to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the firſt, or chief.* And ſo he adviſes us to obtain this *Humility*, that we hold our ſelves leſſe then all others, and that we acknowledge them all for our ſuperiours, and betters. S. *Auguſtine* ſaith, The Apoſtle deceives us not, when he ſaith, that we muſt hold our ſelves for the leaſt of all; and that we muſt eſteem all others to be our ſuperiours, and betters: *Phil.* 2. 3. *Rom.* 12. 10. and he commands not hereby, that we ſhould uſe any words of flat-

tery, or Courtſhip towards them. The Saints did not ſay with counterfeit *Humility*, and telling a lye, that they were the greateſt ſinners in the world: but meerly according to truth, becauſe they thought ſo in their very hearts; and ſo they alſo give us in charge, that we think, and ſay the ſame, and this not by complement, or with fiction.

S. *Bernard* ponders very well to this purpoſe that ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luke* 14. 10. *When you ſhall be invited, ſit you down in the laſt, and loweſt place.* He ſaid not, that you ſhould chooſe a middle place, or that you ſhould ſit amongſt the loweſt, or in the laſt place but one; but he will onely have you ſit in the very loweſt place of all. Not only are you not to prefer your ſelves before any, but not ſo much as to preſume to compare, or equal your ſelves with any other: but eſteem your ſelves to be the moſt miſerable ſinners of the whole World. *It puts you*, ſaith he, *to no danger, if you ſhould humble your ſelves too much, and be the loweſt of all; but the preferring your ſelves before all others, may put you to a great deal of prejudice.* And he brings this compariſon; *When you paſs into*

a low gate, the ſtooping too much with your head can do you no hurt, but if you ſtoop never ſo little leſſe then the gate requires, you may break your head; ſo is it alſo with the ſoul. To humble your ſelves too much, cannot be hurtfull; but to forbear to humble your ſelves, though it be but a little to prefer or equal your ſelves to any one, is a dangerous thing. What knoweſt thou (O man) whether that one whom thou takeſt, not only to be worſe than thou (for perhaps it ſeems to thee now, that thou art grown to live well) but that he is a wicked man and the greateſt ſinner in the whole World may not prove perhaps a better man, than either they or thou, yea and that he is ſo already in the ſight of God. Who knows not whether God will not change hands, as *Jacob* did, and that the lots will be alſo changed; and that thou wilt come to be the forſaken, and the other choſen? How do you know what God hath wrought in that heart ſince yeſterday, yea and in this laſt minute? In one inſtant is God able to make Apoſtles of Publicans and Perſecutors, as he did of S. *Matthew*, and S. *Paul*. Of ſinners more ſtony, and hard then a Diamond, can God make ſons

for himſelf. How mightily did that Phariſee deceive himſelf, when he judged S. *Mary Magdalen* for wicked, and when Chriſt our Lord reproved him, and gave him to underſtand that ſhe whom he held for a publick ſinner, was better than he. And ſo *Aquinas* ſets this down for one of the twelve degrees of *Humility*; *To ſay and think of himſelf, that he is the worſt man of the whole World.* It is not enough to ſay ſo with the tongue, but it muſt be felt with the very heart. Think not that thou haſt profited at all, if thou hold not thy ſelf for the worſt of men.

CHAP. XXX.

How good and holy men, may with truth eſteem themſelves leſſe then others, yea and affirm themſelves to be the greateſt ſinners of the world.

IT will be matter of much profit, to declare how good and holy men may with truth eſteem themſelves leſſe then all; and alſo affirm that they are the greateſt ſinners of the whole world; For we have ſaid that

that we muſt labour to arrive thus far. Some of the Saints refuſe to anſwer the queſtion, how this may be; and content themſelves with believing of themſelves, that they are ſo in their hearts. S. *Dorotheus* relates, that holy *Hoſimus* being one day ſpeaking of *Humility*, and ſaying ſo of himſelf; a certain Philoſopher was there, who asked him how he could hold himſelf to be ſo great a ſinner, ſince he knew himſelf to live ſo uprightly and holily: to which the holy man made this anſwer, *I ſay that this which I have ſaid is true, and that I ſpeak as I think; and therefore ask me no more queſtions.* But S. *Auguſtine*, *Aquinas*, and other Saints give an anſwer to this queſtion, and they do it divers wayes. That of S. *Auguſtine* and *Aquinas* is, that a man placing his eyes upon his own defects, and conſidering the ſecret gifts which his Neighbour hath, or at leaſt may have of God, may with truth affirm of himſelf, that he is the vileſt and greateſt ſinner of the whole World; for he knows his own defects, and knows not another man's graces or gifts. O but ſay you, I ſee that he commits many ſins, which I commit not. But yet how do you

know,

know, what God hath wrought in his heart, since that time. In a moment, may God have secretly imparted some gift and favour to that man, which may have made him excel you, as it hapned to that Pharisee, and that Publican of the Gospel, who went into the Temple to pray. *Verily I say to you* (said Christ our Lord) *that the Publican who was held for wicked, returned justified out of the Temple, and the Pharisee who was held for good, went out condemned.* This alone might serve to fright us, and make us not presume. The truly humble man considers in other men the goodnesse and virtue which they have, and in himself he observes but his own defects; and he is so earnest about the knowledge and redresse thereof, that he hath no leisure to lift up his eyes towards the faults of others, as conceiving himself to have enough of his own to lament: and so he holds all other men for good, and himself for wicked. And by how much the more holy any man is, so much the more easie is this to him; for after the rate, or the increase of his other virtues, the knowing, despising, and humbling himself, doth also increase, for all these things go together.

And

And the more light he hath from Heaven, and the more knowledge of the goodneſſe and Majeſty of Almighty God, the more profound underſtanding will he come to have of his own miſery, and of his nothing, becauſe *Abyſſus abyſſum invocat*, *Pſal.* 42. 9. That depth of the knowledge of the goodneſſe and greatneſſe of God, calls up and diſcovers that other profound depth of our miſery, and makes us able to diſcern the infinite little moats, and grains of duſt of our imperfections. And if we hold our ſelves in any account, it is certainly becauſe we have ſmall knowledge of God. The beams of the ſun of Juſtice have not yet entred in by our window, and ſo we do not onely ſee the moats which are our leſſe defects and imperfections, but we are ſo ſhort-ſighted, or rather indeed ſo very blind, that we ſcarce diſcern our greater ſins.

To this may be added, that God loves *Humility* in us ſo much, and it is ſo very pleaſing to him, that we ſhould hold our ſelves in no account, and preſerve our ſelves therein; that, in order to this end, he is wont many times in the caſe of his great ſervants, to whom he imports many high

high benefits and favours, to diſguiſe his gifts, and to communicate them in ſuch a ſecret and ſtrange manner, that even the man himſelf who receives them, doth not throughly comprehend them, and thinks they are nothing. S. *Hierome* ſaith, *All that beauty of the Tabernacle was covered with the skins of Beaſts.* And ſo uſeth God to conceal and cover the beauty of men's virtues, and of his own graces and benefits; by permitting variety of temptations, yea and ſometimes of ſome errours and imperfections, that ſo they may be the more ſafely conſerved, as burning coals under aſhes might be.

S. *John Climacus* ſaith, that as the Devil layes our virtues and good works before our eyes, that ſo we may grow proud, and be ruined; ſo on the contrary ſide, our Lord God, becauſe he deſires our greater good, gives more particular light to his ſervants, that they may ſee their own imperfections: S. *Bernard* ſaith, *To conſerve* Humility *in the ſervants of God, his divine goodneſſe diſpoſes things in ſuch ſort, as that the more a man profits, the leſſe he conceives himſelf to profit: and when he is arrived to the higheſt degree of virtue, Almigh-*

mighty God permits him to be subject to some such imperfection, as concerns the first degree; to the end that he may conceive himself not to have fully obtained so much as that. And of the same doth S. *Gregory* speak in many places.

Some very well compares *Humility*, and say that as when the Sun appears, other Stars lie hid; so when humility is in the soul, other virtues are not seen, and the humble man conceives that he hath no solid virtue at all. S. *Gregory* saith, *Their virtues being manifest to all men, only themselves see them not.* *Moses* when he came from speaking with God, had a great brightnesse in his face, which the children of Israel saw; but for his part, he saw it not. So the humble man sees no virtues in himself: all that which he sees, seem faults and imperfections, and he believes, that the least part of his miseries, is that which he knows, and that he is ignorant of the greater; and now in the midst of this, it will be easie for him to esteem himself below all; and for the greatest sinner of the whole world.

It is most certain, that as there are many several wayes, whereby God is wont to conduct his Elect, so he leads many by this

this way; namely, of concealing his gifts from them, so that themselves may not see them, nor conceive that they have them; but he manifests them to others, that they may esteem his servants, and be pleased in them. And so saith *S. Paul*; *We have not received the spirit of this World, but the Spirit of God; that we may know the gifts and graces, which we receive from his hand.* And the holy Virgin *Mary* did very well both know, and acknowledge the great graces, and gifts, which she had received from Almighty God: as she saith in her Canticle, *My soul doth magnifie and exalt our Lord, because he who is omnipotent hath wrought mighty things in me.* And this is not only not contrary to *Humility* and Perfection, but it is accompanied with an *Humility* so very much elevated, and so high, that for this reason the Saints are wont to style it, *the humility of great and perfect men.*

There is a great errour and danger, whereof we are advertised by the Saints; and it is when some think of themselves, that they have more graces of God, than indeed they have. In which errour was that miserable Creature, to whom God com-

commanded this to be said in the Apocalyps, *Thou saist that thou art rich, and that thou hast need of nothing, but thou dost not understand thine own case, for thou art miserable, & poor, & blind, & naked.* In the same errour, was that Pharise who gave God thanks, that he was not like others, beleving of himself, that he had, what indeed he had not: & that therefore he was better then other men. And sometimes this kind of pride steals in upon us so secretly, and with such disguise, that almost before we know where we are, we grow very full of our selves, and of our own estimation. An excellent remedy for this is, that we ever carry our eyes open towards the vertues of others, and shut towards our own, and so to live ever in a holy kind of fear, whereby we our selves will be more safe, and the gifts of God better kept.

But yet in fine, forasmuch as our Lord is not tied to this, he conducts his servants by several wayes. Sometimes as S. *Paul* saith: he will do his servants the particular favour of making them know the gifts which they have received from his hand: which way soever we turn our eyes, whether we cast them inward, upon what we have

of

of our ſelves, or whether we caſt them upward, upon what we have received of God; we ſhall find occaſion enough to be humbled, and to eſteem our ſelves below all.

S. *Gregory* ponders thoſe words which *David* ſaid to *Saul*, after he might have killed him in the Cave into which *Saul* had entred; ſaying, *Whom doſt thou perſecute O King of Iſrael? thou perſecuteſt a dead dog, & a ſingle flea, as I am*; *David* was already anointed for King, & had underſtood from the Prophet *Samuel* who anointed him, that God would take the Kingdome from *Saul*, and give it him; and yet nevertheleſſe he humbles and leſſens himſelf before him, though he knew that God had preferred him, and that in the ſight of God, he was a better man than *Saul*. Whereby we may learn to eſteem our ſelves leſs than them of whom we know not in what condition or degree they ſtand in the preſence of Almighty God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

That this third degree of Humility is a means to overcome all temptations, & to obtain the perfection of all the Vertues.

Cassianus saith, that it was a tradition of the ancient Fathers, and as it were the first principle amongst them, *That a man could not obtain purity of heart, and the perfection of vertue, if first he did not conceive and know that all his industry, diligence, and labour would not be sufficient for that purpose, without the especial favour and help of God, who is the prime Authour & giver of all good things.* And he saith moreover, *that this knowledge of his must not be only speculative, because we have heard it or read it, or because it is a Doctrine of Faith; but we must know it practically, and by experience, and be so convinced, so resolved and setled in this truth, as if we saw it with our eyes, and touch it with our hands.* And this is literally the third degree of *humility*, whereof now we treat. And of this kind of *humility* it is, that the holy Scripture speaks, and which promise so great, & even innume-

innumerable bleſſings, to ſuch as are humble. And for this reaſon the Saints aſſign it for the laſt and moſt perfect degree of Humility, and ſay, *That it is the foundation of all vertue, and the preparation or diſpoſition for receiving all kind of graces and gifts from God.* And *Caſſianus* profecuting this point more in particular, ſaith concerning chaſtity, *That no endeavour of ours will ſerve for the obtaining thereof, till we certainly underſtand, that it is not to be had, but from the liberality and mercy of almighty God.* And S. *Auguſtine* agrees very well herewith. For the firſt and chief means which he delivers for the obtaining and conſerving the gift of chaſtity, is *humility*: We muſt know that it is the gift of God, and that it muſt come to us from above, and that we muſt place our whole confidence in him. And ſo one of thoſe old Fathers ſaid, *That a man would be tempted with carnal thoughts, till he come to know very well, that chaſtity is the gift of our* Lord: *and no acquiſition of our own.* *Palladius* confirms this, by the example of *Abbot Moyſes*, who having been a man of a ſtrange corporal ſtrength,

as

as alſo of a moſt vicious mind, was converted afterward to God, with his whole heart. At the firſt, he was grievouſly tempted, eſpecially concerning impurity; and by the advice of thoſe Fathers, he imployed his beſt means to overcome it. He prayed ſo long, as that he paſſed ſix years in prayer, yea and ſpent the greateſt part of the whole nights in prayer, remaining ſtill upon his feet. He uſed much handy labour, he eat nothing but bread; and that in ſmall quantity: he went carrying water to the old Monks in their Cels, and uſed many other great mortifications, and auſterities. But yet with all this, he came not to be free from his temptations; but was even ſet on fire by them; and was ſometimes in danger to fall, and to forſake his purity. Being in this trouble, the holy Abbot *Iſidorus* came to him, and told him on the part of God, that for that time forward his temptations ſhould ceaſe in the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and ſo they did, & never ſet upon him more. And the Saint, by way of declaring the cauſe, adds this; that till then, God had not given compleat Victory to Abbot *Moyſes*, leſt he ſhould have grown vain and proud; as con-

conceiving that he had conquered by his own ſtrength: and therefore that God had till then permitted it for his greater good. *Moſes* had not yet obtained the gift of diſtruſting himſelf: and now that he might obtain it, and not grow proud by confiding in himſelf, God left him ſo long a time, and he obtained not by ſo many, and ſo great endeavours, the compleat Victory over this paſſion, which others by diligence had obtained.

The like did *Palladius* relate to have hapned to the Abbot *Pacon*, for even whileſt he was ſeventy years old; he was very much moleſted by unclean temptations: and he ſaith, that the other affirmed it to him with an oath, that after he was fifty years old, the combat had been ſo uſual, and ſo very fierce, as that there had not paſſed either one day or night in all that time wherein he had not been tempted to that ſin. He did very extraordinary things to free himſelf from theſe temptations: but they did not ſerve the turn. And lamenting one day, and even half fearing, that our Lord had forſaken him, he heard a voice which interiourly ſaid thus to him: *Know that the cauſe why God hath,*

hath permitted this ſharp aſſault to be made againſt thee, hath been to the end, that thou mighteſt know thy own poverty and miſery, and the little or nothing which thou haſt of thy ſelf; and therefore ſee that thou humble thy ſelf hereafter, and confide not in thy ſelf at all; but in all things have recourſe for help to me. And he ſaith, that he was ſo comforted by this inſtruction, that he never felt that temptation again. In fine, the will of our Lord is, that we put all our confidence in him, and diſtruſt all our own diligences.

This is the Doctrine not only of S. *Auguſtine*, *Caſſian*, and thoſe ancient Fathers, but of the Author of the book of Wiſdome; and that in thoſe very tearms whereby we have expreſſed it here. For the wiſe man in this book expreſly ſets down both the Theory and practice of this point in theſe words; *When I knew* (ſaith he) *that I could not be continent*, Wiſ. 8. 21. (ſo the vulgar Latine readeth) but by the gifts of God. Now continent is here the general word, which comprehends not only the containing or reſtraining that paſſion which is againſt chaſtity, but all the other paſſions alſo, which rebell againſt reaſon.

And

And that other place alſo of *Eccleſ.* *No weight of Gold is able to go in balance with a continent ſoul. No pretious thing is ſo much worth as the perſon who is continent.* He means that kind of man, who intirely contains all his affections and appetites, that they may not paſſe beyond the bounds of reaſon. And now, ſaith *Solomon*, knowing that I could not contain theſe paſſions and powers, both of my body and ſoul, within the moderation of vertue and truth, without the eſpecial gift of God, I had recourſe to our Lord, and begged this gift of him, with my whole heare. So that, in fine, this is the only means whereby a man may become continent: and be able to continue continent, to reſtrain and govern our paſſions, and bind over all temptations, and the perfection of all Vertues. And ſo the prophet underſtood it rightly, when he ſaid, *Except the Lord build the houſe, their labour is but loſt that build it. Except the Lord keepeth the City, the watchmen waketh but in vain*, Pſal. 127. 1, 2. It is he who muſt give us all good things, and when he hath given them, muſt conſerve them to us; or elſe all our labour will be loſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

That Humility is not contrary to Magnanimity, but rather the foundation and cauſe thereof.

Aquinas treating of the vertue of *Magnanimity*, makes this queſtion; *On the one ſide, the Saints ſay, yea and the holy Scripture alſo ſaith, that* Humility *is very neceſſary for us; and withall, that* Magnanimity *is alſo neceſſary; eſpecially for ſuch as exerciſe high Miniſtries, and live in high places.* Now theſe two vertues ſeem to be contrary in themſelves, becauſe Magnanimity is a greatneſſe of mind to enterpriſe great and excellent things, which in themſelves may be worthy of honour; and both the one and the other ſeems to be contrary to Humility. For to enterpriſe great things, ſeems not to ſuit well with this vertue, becauſe one of the degrees of *Humility*, which the Saints aſſign, is, *To confeſſe and hold himſelf unworthy and unprofitable for all things; and for a man to attempt that for which he is not fit, it ſeems to be preſumption and pride.* And alſo to be contrary, becauſe

the true humble man muſt be very far from deſiring honour and eſtimation. To this *Aquinas* anſwers very well, and ſayes, *That although in appearance, and by the exteriour ſound of the words, theſe two vertues may ſeem to be contrary, between themſelves: yet in effect and truth, one vertue cannot be contrary to another*; and that concerning theſe two *vertues* of Humility and Magnanimity, *that if we will attentively caſt our eyes upon the truth and ſubſtance of the thing, we ſhall not only find that they are not contrary, but that they are direct Sisters, and depend much upon one another*. And this he declares very well, becauſe as the firſt, which is to enterprife and attempt great things, which is proper to the magnanimous perſons; it is not only not contrary to the humble man, but rather is very proper to him; and he who is the one, may very well do the other.

If confiding in our own diligence and ſtrength, we ſhould undertake great things, it might be preſumption and pride, becauſe we may not undertake things either great or ſmal, in the confidence of our own ſtrength; *for as much as of our ſelves, we are not able to have one good thought*, as S. *Paul* ſaith.

ith. But the firm foundation of this ver-
e of Magnanimity is to be by diſtruſting
r ſelves, and all humane endeavours, and
put our whole confidence in God; and
is doth Humility alſo; and therefore do
e Saints call it the foundation of all ver-
es, as we ſaid before, becauſe it opens the
il, and ſounds deep into the very bot-
ne, and takes out all the ſand and looſe
uffe, till at length it arrive to that li-
ing rock, which is Chriſt our Lord, that
we may build thereupon.

S. *Bernard* upon that place of the *Can-
cles*; *Who is this which riſes up from the
ſert, abounding in delights, and leaning
on her beloved*; goes declaring how all
r vertue, our ſtrength, and all our good
orks, are to rely and reſt upon our Belo-
d. And he brings for an example, that
S. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 15. 10.
*By the grace of God, I am what I am, and
s grace which was beſtowed upon me, was
t in vain: but I laboured more abundant-
y then they all.* The Apoſtle begins to
count his labours, and how much he had
ne in the preaching of the Goſpel, and
e ſervice of the Church, till at length
came to ſay, that he had laboured more

than the reſt of the Apoſtles. S. *Bernard* ſaith, *Take heed what you ſay, O holy Apoſtle; To the end that you may be able to ſay this, yea and to the end that you may not looſe it: rely upon your Beloved.* Now he replyes upon his Beloved; *Not I, but the grace of God in me, Phil.* 4. 13. And writing to the *Philippians* he ſaith, *I can do all things*, and then inſtantly he leans upon his Beloved, *through Chriſt which ſtrengthneth me.* In God we ſhall be able to do all things, by his grace we ſhall be of power to do all things.

This muſt be the foundation of our Magnanimity, and this is that which the Prophet *Eſay* ſaith, *Iſa.* 40. 31. *They who diſtruſt themſelves, and put their whole confidence in God, ſhall change their ſtrength.* They ſhall change their ſtrength of men, which is meer weakneſſe, for the ſtrength of God; they ſhall change their arm of fleſh and bloud, for the arm of our Lord: and ſo they ſhall have ſtrength for all things, for they ſhall be able to do all things in God. And therefore did S. *Leo* ſay, *Nothing is hard to the humble, nothing is harſh to the meek.* The truly humble man, is he who is magnanimous, courageous,

gious, and hardy to enterprise, and attempt great things: or rather nothing will be hard to him, because he confides not in himself, but in God, and looking up to him, contemns all dangers: *In God we can do all things.* This is that, whereof we have much need, a great and couragious mind, and a great confidence in God, and not a weak heart which takes away our appetites from doing our duties. So that in our selves, we must be humble, as knowing that of our selves we are nothing, we can do nothing, and we are good for nothing; but in *God*, and in his power and grace, we are to be strong hearted towards the enterprizing of great things.

S. *Basil* declares this very well upon those words of the Prophet *Esay*; *Here am I, send me*, Isa. 6. 8. *God* was resolved to send one to preach to his people, and forasmuch as he is pleased to work things in us, with our good will and consent, he said, and said it so, as that *Esay* might hear him; *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Isa. 6. 8. To this the Prophet answers, *O Lord here I am, if you will be pleased to send me.* S. *Basil* ponders very well that

ſaid not, Lord I will go, and can diſpatch this buſineſſe, for he was humble, and knew his own weakneſſe well, and ſaw that it was boldneſſe to promiſe for himſelf, that he would perform ſo great a work, but he ſaid, *Lord here am I ready*, and willing to receive that which you ſhall be pleaſed to give; do you ſend me, for upon your warrant I will go. As if he had ſaid, If you ſend me, I may well go; for going in your name, I ſhall be able to perform the work. Then *God* ſaid to him, *Vade, Go.* See here, ſaith S. *Baſil*, how the Prophet *Eſay* took his dergee for being a Preacher, and an Apoſtle of *God*: becauſe he could anſwer very well in the Doctrine of *Humility*, and attributed not his going to himſelf, but acknowledg'd his own inſufficiency & weakneſſe, he placed all his confidence in *God*, believing he could do all things in him, and that if *God* ſent him, he might go. For this reaſon, *God* gave him the charge, and bad him go, and ſo made him his Preacher, Embaſſadour, and Apoſtle. This is our ſtrength, and our magnanimity, for the enterprizing and undertaking great things. Be not therefore diſanimated, or diſmayed, when you conſider your own inſufficiency

and

ing weakneſſe, *Jer.* 1. 7. 8. *Say not I am a child* (ſaith God to the Prophet *Jeremia*) *for thou ſhalt go to all that I ſhall ſend thee, and whatſoever I command thee, thou ſhalt ſpeak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee.* So that forasmuch as concerns this part of *Humility*, it is not only contrary to magnanimity, but it is rather the foundation and root thereof.

The ſecond point, which belongs to the magnanimous perſon, is to deſire to do great things, and that in themſelves they may be worthy of honour. But this alſo is not contrary to *Humility*, *becauſe*, as *Aquinas* ſaith, *although the magnanimous perſon deſire to do ſuch things, yet he deſires it not for humane honour, nor is this his end.* He will take care indeed to deſerve it, but not either to procure, or eſteem it. Nay rather he hath a heart which ſo truly deſpiſeth both honour and diſhonour, that he holds nothing to be great but vertue, and for love thereof, he is moved to do great things, deſpiſing the honour which men can give. For vertue is a thing ſo high, that it cannot be rewarded ſufficiently by men, and deſerves to be honoured and re-

warded by Almighty God, and therefore the magnanimous perſon values not all the honours of the world at a ſtraw. It is a thing of no price at all with him, his flight is higher. For the only love of God and vertue, is he invited to do great things, and he deſpiſes all the reſt. Now then, for the having of a heart which is ſo great, ſo generous, ſuch a deſpiſer of the honour and diſhonour of men, ſuch as the magnanimous perſon ought to have, it is neceſſary that he have alſo much *Humility*. To the end that a man may arrive to ſo great perfection, as to be able to ſay with S. *Paul*, *I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am inſtructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to ſuffer need, Phil.* 4.12. *By honour, and diſhonour, by evil report, and good report, as deceivers and yet true,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 8, 9. *As unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live*: To the end that ſo ſtiffe and ſo contrary winds as they of honour and diſhonour, of praiſe and murmuring, of favours and perſecutions, may cauſe no change in us, nor make us ſtumble, or ſhrink, but that we may ſtill remain

main in our own being, it is neceſſary to have a great foundation of *Humility*, and of wiſdome from Heaven. I know not whether you will be able to keep your ſelf free, for the doing of all good works, when you are in abundance like the Apoſtle S. *Paul*. As for ſuffering poverty, and to be humble in the midſt of diſhonours, and affronts, this perhaps you will be able to do. But to be humble in honours, chairs, pulpets, and the higher ſort of Miniſteries, I know not whether you wil be able. Alas thoſe Angels once of Heaven, knew not how to do this, but they grew proud, and fell. *Boetius* ſaith, *Though both eſtates are to be feared, yet proſperity more then adverſity.* It is harder for a man to conſerve himſelf in *Humility*, in honour, and eſtimation of the World, and in high imployments, and Miniſteries, then in diſhonour and contempt, and in the diſcharge of places which are mean and poor, for theſe things draw *humility* after them, and thoſe others vanity, and pride. *Scientia inflat*: knowledge, and all other high things do naturally puff us up, and make us giddy, and therefore the Saints ſay, that it is the *humility* of great and perfect men, to know how to be humble.

We must therefore endeavour to arrive to this *humility*, by the grace of our Lord; we, I say, who are called, not to the end that we should be shut up in corners, or be hidden under a bushel, but set up on high, like a City upon a hill, or like a taper upon a candle-stick to shine, and give light to the world. For which purpose it will be necessary for us to lay a very good foundation; and forasmuch as is on our part, to have great desire to be disesteemed and despised; and that this may flow out of a profound knowledge of our own misery, our baseness, and our nothing.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of the great benefits and advantages which are in this third degree of Humility.

AFter King *David* had prepared much gold and silver, and many rich materials for the building of the Temple, he offered them up to God, and said, *All things O Lord are thine, and that which we have received at thy hands, that do we render, and return again.* This is that which

which we muſt do and ſay, in all our good works. O Lord all our good works are thine, and ſo we return what thou haſt given us. S. *Auguſtine* ſaith very well: *He who puts himſelf to recount the ſervices which he hath done thee, of what other thing doth he tell thee, O Lord, but of the benefits & gifts which he hath received from thy holy hand. This is an effect of thy infinite mercy, and goodneſſe towards us, to qualifie thine own benefits, and gifts to us, to be as new vertues of ours: and ſo when thou payeſt us for our ſervices, thou rewardeſt thine own benefits, and for one grace of thine, thou giveſt us another, Gratiam pro gratia*; Our Lord is content to proceed with us, like another *Joſeph*, by giving us not only corn, but he will alſo give us the price, and mony which it coſt. All is Gods gift, and all muſt be aſcribed, and returned to him, he gives both grace, and glory.

One of the great helps & benefits, which is to be reaped, by this third degree of *Humility*, is that it is the good and true gratitude, and thankſgiving, for the benefits which we have received at the hand of God. It is well known how highly the giving

ving of thanks, & gratitude is recommended, and eſteemed in holy Scripture; ſince we ſee that when our Lord vouchſafed any remarkable benefit to his people, he inſtantly ordained, that ſome memory, or feaſt of thankſgiving ſhould be inſtituted: becauſe gratitude doth much import us, towards the receiving of new graces and favours. Now this is very well effected, by this third degree of *humility*, which conſiſts as hath been ſaid, in that a man attribute nothing to himſelf, but all to God, and to give him the glory of all. For in this conſiſts true gratitude, & giving of thanks; and not in ſaying with the tongue: O Lord I give thee thanks for thy benefits, though yet we muſt alſo praiſe, and give God thanks, with the tongue. But if you ſhall do it with the tongue alone, it will not be to give thanks, but to ſay thanks. But now that it may not only be ſaying of thanks, but with the heart, to acknowledge, that all the good we have is of God, retaining to our ſelves no part thereof: for in this ſort, a man ſtrips himſelf of that honour which he ſees to be none of his own, and he gives it to God whoſe it is. And this did *Chriſt* our *Lord* intend to make us know, in the holy

holy Goſpel, when having cured thoſe Leapers, and one only returning to give him thanks, ſaid, *There is none who hath returned, and given glory to God, but this ſtranger.* And when God admoniſhed the people of *Iſrael* that they muſt be grateful, and not forget the benefits which they had received, he gave them this advertiſement; *Deut.* 8. 11. *Take heed that you forget not God, when you ſhall be in the Land of promiſe, in great proſperity of temporal goods, of houſes, Lands, and ſtock, take heed that your hearts be not puffed up, and that you become not ungrateful, and ſay that you have obtained it by your own wiſdome, and ſtrength. My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth,* v. 17. This is to forget God, and this is the greateſt ingratitude into which a man can fall, to aſcribe the gift of God to himſelf. Take heed you have not once a thought of any ſuch thing as this. But ſee that you remember God, and acknowledge that the ſtrength was his, and that he fortified you in all things: and this, not for any deſert of yours, but only to comply with the promiſe, which of himſelf he had franckly made to your forefathers. This is

the

the gratitude, and rendring of praiſe: wherewith our Lord God will be honoured, for the benefits and favours which he imparts to us, *Pſal.* 50. 23. *Who ſo offereth me thanks and praiſe, he honoureth me.* This is the ſum of S. *Paul's Doxology: Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* That God only have the glory of all.

From hence alſo grows another benefit, that the true humble man, though he have many gifts of God, and be much eſteemed by the whole world for them, doth not yet value himſelf one hair the more for that; but remains ſo firm in the knowledge of his own baſeneſſe, as if none of that which they aſcribed, were to be found in him. Yea & even whilſt he is receiving the gifts of God, he is the more humbled, and confounded thereby. S. *Dorotheus* ſaith, *that as it happens with trees, which are mightily loaden with fruit, makes the boughs ſtoop ſometimes ſo far, as to break them with their great wait, whereas the boughs which bear no fruit remain perking up, and high: and as ears of Corn, when they are very full, hang down their heads ſo far, as if*

they

they would even break the ſtalk, whereon they grow: and when they ſtand boult upright, it is a ſhrewd ſign that they have nothing in them; ſo it happeneth, ſaith he, in the way of ſpirit, that they who are empty, and without fruit, look bigg, and lofty, and hold themſelves for gallant men; but they on the other ſide, who are much loaden with fruit, and are full of the graces and gifts of God, are the more humble, and confounded thereby. For even from thoſe benefits and gifts, the true ſervants of God take occaſion to be the more humbled, and to walk with the more warineſs, and fear. S. *Gregory* ſaith, *that as a man who hath borrowed great ſums of mony, is glad that he hath borrowed it, yet this joy is very ſufficiently watered by knowing that he is in obligation to pay it again; and whether he ſhall be able to comply, when his Bond is due; ſo the man who is truly humble, the more gifts he hath received, he acknowledges himſelf to be ſo much the more deeply a Debtor to Almighty God, and ſo much the more bound to ſerve him, and he is ſtill thinking, that he correſponds not to theſe greater favours by greater ſervices, nor to greater graces by greater thanks: and he*

con-

conceives and believes, that to whomſoever God would have ſhewed that goodneſſe, which he had ſhewed to him, that man would have made better uſe of it, and would have been more grateful, and a better man. And ſo one of the conſiderations which makes the true ſervants of God to be very much humbled and confounded is this; They know that God will not only call them to an account for their ſins committed, but for his favour alſo received: and they know that to whom God gives much, from him he will require much, and to whom he gives more, of him he will alſo require more. Holy *Macarius* ſaith, *that the humble man looks upon the gifts and favours of God, as ſome depoſitary or treaſurer would do, who had his maſters goods in his hands; for ſuch a one will rather be in fear and care, than in pride, leſt ſomewhat ſhould by his fault be loſt, when they call him to make up his accounts.*

From hence alſo grows yet another good, which is, that the man who is truly humble, diſeſteems or deſpiſes no other man, into whatſoever defects and ſins he may perhaps ſee him fall, nor will he thereby grow proud, or eſteem himſelf the more,

more, for that; but rather will take occa-
on thereby, to humble himſelf the more by having ſeen him fall, through the conſideration that the other, and himſelf, are both made of the ſame mould, and that when the other falls, he alſo falls, for as much as he is in himſelf. For, as S. *Auguſtine* ſaith, *there is no ſin which is committed by any one, which another man would not, or might not commit, if the hand of Gods mercy with-held him not.* And ſo one of thoſe antient Fathers, when he heard that any man had fallen, was wont to weep bitterly, and ſay: *To day for him, and to morrow for me. As he fell, I might as well have fallen, ſince I am a weak man as he is. I muſt eſteem it, as a moſt particular bleſſing of our Lord, that I fell not too.* Thus do all the Saints adviſe us, that whenſoever we ſee one man blind, another deaf, another lame, another maimed, or ſick: we muſt eſteem all thoſe miſeries of theirs, to be benefits of ours, and give thanks to God, for not having made us blinde, or deaf, or lame, or maimed, as he made him. And ſo alſo muſt we make account, that the ſins of all other men, are ſo many benefits of our own, for I might have com-

committed them all, if our Lord out of his infinite mercy, had not defended me. By this means, the ſervants of God preſerve themſelves in *Humility*. S. *Gregory* ſaith; *True juſtice makes us have compaſſion of our neighbours, and falſe juſtice diſdain and ſcorn.* But ſuch men as theſe, have reaſon to be afraid of that which S. *Paul* ſaith, *Gal.* 6. 1, *Conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* I pray God they come not to be tempted, in that very thing which they condemn in others: and that, at length, they finde not to their coſt, how great that miſery is, which uſes to be the puniſhment of this ſin. *In three things,* ſaid one of thoſe ancient Fathers, *have I judged others, and my ſelf fell into them all*; To the end that we may know, by experience, that our ſelves alſo are but men, and that we may learn, neither to judge nor deſpiſe any man.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Of the great mercies and favours, which God ſhews to the humble, and why he exalts them ſo high.

All good things together came to me with her. Wiſd. 7. 11. Theſe are the

the words of the Wiſe man concerning divine Wiſdome, which ſay, that all good things come with it. But yet, we may well apply them to *Humility*, and ſay that all good things come to us thereby; ſince the ſame Wiſe man ſaith, that *where Humility is, there alſo is wiſdome. Ubi eſt Humilitas, ibi eſt & Sapientia.* And in another place, he ſaith, that to have this *Humility*, is ſupreme wiſdome. And the Prophet *David* ſaith, that *God gives wiſdome to the humble.* But beſides this, we are taught this truth, in expreſs terms both in the old and new Teſtament; where great bleſſings and graces are promiſed to them by Almighty God; ſometimes by the name of the humble: at other times, of little ones, and ſometimes of the poor of ſpirit, for by theſe, and ſuch other names are they, who are truly humble, called. Saith God, by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit*; and *trembleth at my words.* Upon theſe doth God caſt his eyes, to do them favour, and even to fill them with benedictions. And the glorious Apoſtles S. *Peter*, and S. *James*, in their Canonical Epiſtles, ſay, *God reſiſts*

reſiſts the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble, Jam. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 5. We are alſo taught the ſame by that moſt bleſſed *Virgin* in her Canticle. *Our Lord hath put down the mighty from their ſeats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath ſent empty away*, Luk. 1. 52, 53. And this is that, which the Prophet had ſaid before: *For thou wilt ſave the afflicted (or humble) people, and ſhalt bring down the high looks of the proud*, Pſal. 18. 27. And that alſo which Chriſt our Lord ſaid in the holy Goſpel, *Luk*, 14. 11. *Whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed. and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* As the waters run down the vallies, ſo the rains of Gods grace fall down upon the humble. And as vallies uſe to abound with fruit by reaſon of the much water which is aſſembled there: ſo they, who are low and humble in his ſight, uſe to yield much fruit, through the many gifts and graces, which they receive from God. S. *Auguſtine* ſaith, *that* Humility *draws down the moſt high God to it ſelf.* God is high, and if you humble your ſelves, he will deſcend to you, but if you grow proud

and

and exalt your ſelves, he will fly from you. Will you know why, ſaith S. *Auguſtine*, Becauſe (as we are taught by the royal Prophet) *God is a high & ſoveraign Lord, and he looks upon ſuch as are humble*: and his looking upon them, is to fill them with all good things: but he ſaith, that *God ſees the proud from far off*, becauſe, as when here, we ſee a man far off, we know him not, ſo doth God not know the proud, in order to ſhew them any favour. I tell you for a certain truth, ſaith God, to wicked and proud people, that *I know you not*, Luk. 13. 27. *Bonaventure* ſaith, *as when wax is ſoft, it is ready to receive any impreſſion: ſo doth* humility *diſpoſe your ſouls to receive vertue & grace from God*. When *Joſeph* invited his brethren, the youngeſt of them all had the beſt part.

Let us now look why God raiſes the humble ſo high, and is pleaſed to do them ſo great favour. It is, becauſe all his goods do thus come back again to himſelf. For the humble man carries nothing away, and attributes nothing to himſelf; but intirely aſcribes and reſtores all to God, and gives him the honour, and glory of all. Such as theſe, ſaith God, may very well be truſted

with

with our goods: we may well put our riches and bleſſings into their hands, for they are ſafe perſons, and will not riſe and run away with them: and ſo God proceeds with them, as in a caſe meerly his own; becauſe all the honour and glory is ſtill his: We ſee, that a great Lord or King holds it for a point of greatneſſe, to raiſe a man ſometimes, out of the very duſt, who before was nothing: ſo is the bounty and greatneſſe of that King the more viſibly perceived. Thus ſaith the Apoſtle S. *Paul*, 2 Corinth. 4. 7. *We have the treaſure of the graces and gifts of God in pots of clay, to the end that the world may know, that the treaſure is Gods, and not ours*: for clay breeds no ſuch commodity as that. So that for this, doth God exalt the humble, & ſhew them ſo many favours: & for this doth he leave proud men empty: becauſe the proud man confides much in himſelf, and in his own diligences & waies, & aſcribes much to himſelf, & takes a vain contentment in the good ſucceſſe of his buſineſſe, as if it had been diſpatched by his own induſtries and pains, and all this takes ſomewhat from God, and ſteals away that honour and glory, which is proper to his di-

divine Majeſtie. As ſoon as we have once made ſome little entrance into the uſe of prayer with any little devotion, any little tear, which we ſhed, we conceive that already we are grown to be ſpiritual, and men of prayer. And ſometimes we will be alſo preferring our ſelves before others, and we will think that they have not profitted ſo much, nor are grown ſo ſpiritual as we. For this reaſon, our Lord doth us no greater favour; and ſometimes he takes that from us which he had given us; leſt the good ſhould be an occaſion of ill to us, and leſt health ſhould be turned into ſickneſſe, and treacle into poyſon, and ſo his benefits and gifts, ſhould prove to our damnation through our ill uſe therof: as to the ſick man of a weak ſtomack, though the meat be good, yet they muſt give him but little of it, becauſe he hath not ſtrength to digeſt more; and if they gave him more, it would corrupt, and be converted into ill humour. That oyl of the Prophet *Elizeus*, never gave over to run, till ſuch time as veſſels were wanting, wherein it might be received: but then the holy Scripture ſaith, inſtantly the oyl forbore to run. Now ſuch is the oyl of the mercy of God, which, in

it

it ſelf, is not limited: for the graces and mercies of God, have no limits at all on his part. God hath not ſtreightned, or cloſed his hand, nor is his nature changed; for God is neither changed, nor can change, but ever remains in his own nature, and hath more deſire to give, than we to take. The fault is on our ſide, who want empty veſſels to receive the oyl of the graces and mercies of God. We are very full of our ſelves, and put much truſt in our own endeavour. *Humility*, and the knowledge of our own weakneſſe empties the houſe, and takes a man off from himſelf & makes him diſtruſt himſelf, and all humane helps, and aſcribes nothing to himſelf, but all to God; and to ſuch men as theſe, God ſhews his favours with full hands.

CHAP. XXXV.

How much it imports us to betake our ſelves to Humility, to ſupply thereby, whatſoever is wanting to us in vertue, and perfection, and to the end that God may not humble us, by puniſhing us.

THe bleſſed S. *Bernard* ſaith, *A very ſtupid fool is he, who confides in any thing*

thing but Humility: for alas, we have all ſinned and offended God many waies: and ſo we can plead right to nothing, but puniſhment. *If man*, ſaith *Job*, *will contend with God, he cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand*, Job. 9. 3. To a thouſand accuſations he will not be able to give one good diſcharge. What then remains, but only to retire our ſelves towards Humility: and to ſupply by that, the want which we may have of other things. And becauſe this is a remedy of much importance, the Saint repeats it many times, both in theſe and other words; *Let that which is wanting to you in the purity of your conſcience, be ſupplied by your being aſhamed of your ſelves: and let that which is wanting to you in fervour and perfection, be made up by your confuſion.* And S. *Dorotheus* recommended this very much, and ſaid, *Brethren, ſince we cannot through our weakneſſe, work and labour ſo much as we would; yet let us humble our ſelves at leaſt, and by this means I hope that we ſhall hereafter be able to find our ſelves, in ſociety with them who have wrought hard.* And when, after you have committed many ſins, you ſhall find your ſelves diſabled to do

itnany works of repentance and mortification for want of health; walk you quietly on, by the plain and even way of *Humility*, for so you will meet with a most convenient means for your salvation. If you think you be not able to enter into and excel in prayer; enter at least into your own confusion: if you conceive that you have no talent for important things, procure to get Humility, for by this, you shall supply for all those things.

Let us therefore consider here, how little our Lord asks of us, and with how little he contents himself. He desires, that according to our baseness, we would know, and humble our selves. If God should ask of us great Fasts, great and many good works, great and high contemplations; some men might excuse themselves, and say, that they had no strength for the one, and no talent or ability for the other. But for the not humbling our selves we have no reason or excuse to alledge. You cannot say, that you have not health to be humble, or that you have no talent or ability for that. *There is nothing more easie*, (saith S. *Bernard*) *than for a man to humble himself, if he have a mind to it.* We can all do this, if we will,

and

nd we have matter enough for it, to work pon within doors. All the furniture of hy *Humility* thou haſt at home. Let us herefore retire our ſelves now at laſt to *Humility*, and ſo let us ſupply with conſion that which is wanting to us of perfection, and ſo we ſhall be able to move he bowels of God to mercy and pardon. At leaſt, ſince we are poor let us be humble oo; and we ſhall give contentment to God; but to be poor and proud, will offend him much. Of three things, which he Wiſe-man ſets down, to be much abborred by Almighty God, this is the firſt, *A poor man that is proud*, *Eccleſ.* 25. 2. Yea & even it is odious alſo amongſt men.

But let us humble our ſelves at leaſt, leſt God humble us, for thus he is very ordinarily wont to do. *He that exalteth himſelf hall be humbled*, Luk. 14. 10. If therefore ou will not have God humble you, take are to humble your ſelves. S. *Gregory* ſaith, *Do you know how much God loves* Humiity, *and how greatly he abhors pride and reſumption*? He abhors it ſo much, that e permits us firſt to fall into many little faults, that he may teach us, that ſince we re not able to keep our ſelves from little

ſins and temptations, we may be very certain, that in our ſelves we have no means to avoid ſuch as are greater: and that ſo we may not be proud, when there is queſtion of great things, nor attribute any thing to our ſelves, but walk ever on with *Humility*, and fear, and beſeech our *Lord* to ſhew us favour and grace. S. *Auguſtine* upon thoſe words, *And without him was not any thing made that was made*, Joh. 1. 3. And S. *Jerome* upon that of the Prophet *Joel*, *And I will reſtore to you the yeers that the locuſt hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm:* Joel 2. 25. Say, that to humble a man, & to tame his pride, God created theſe little animals, and poor baſe worms which are ſo troubleſome to us, and that the proud people of *Pharaoh*, might eaſily have been tamed and humbled, if God would have ſent Bears, Lions, and Serpents in upon them; but he thought fit to tame their pride by the baſeſt ſort of Creatures, as gnats, flies, and frogs, that he might humble them ſo much the more. And ſo alſo, to the end that we may be humbled, and confounded, God permits us to fall into little faults; and gives way that ſome poor and weak temptations,

ations, which are like gnats, and ſe
deed to have any body or bulk in t
ay ſometimes make war againſt us.
e will conſider attentively, what is wont
metimes to diſquiet us: we ſhall find
at they are certain trifling things, which
ing ſifted, and diſcovered well, have no
bſtance in them at all; *I know not what
ittle word they ſaid to me; or elſe they
id it to me in ſuch a manner; or me-
bought they made light of me*: and the
ke. Of a fly which paſſes through the air,
man ſometimes will build a whole tower
wind, and then adding one thing to a-
ther, it ſhall ſerve to make his heart ve-
unquiet. What would then become of
, if God ſhould let looſe ſome Lion, or
yger againſt us, when we are put into ſuch
iſorder, by a gnat? What would become
f us, if we were ſet upon by ſome grie-
ous temptation? And thus are we to
raw more Humility and confuſion out of
uch things as theſe. And if, as S. *Bernard*
aith, this be drawn from thence, it is a great
ercy and benefit and favour of God, that
uch toys as thoſe may not be wanting to us
& that this may be able to make us humble.

But if theſe ſlight things will not ſerve

ſins arm, then know, that God will paſs tainner on, and that very much to your coſt, tour ſo he is accuſtomed to do. God doth ſo highly abhor preſumption and pride, and loves Humility ſo much, that the Saints affirm, that he is wont, through his juſt and moſt ſecret judgement to permit that a man may fall into grievous ſins, that he may be humbled thereby. They ſay that he puniſhes ſecret pride with open luſt. And to this purpoſe they bring that which S. *Paul* ſaid of thoſe Philoſophers, whom for their pride, *God delivered over to the deſires of their hearts*, Rom. 1.24. They came to fall into unclean ſins, which were moſt filthy, and not to be named; God permitting it ſo for their pride, to the end that they might be humbled, and confounded, when they ſaw themſelves turned beaſts, with the heart and converſation, and cuſtome of beaſts. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations?* Jer. 10. 7. Who will not tremble at this puniſhment, which is ſo great, as that there is none greater out of hell? Nay ſin is even worſe then hell. *Who O Lord hath known the power of thy wrath? or who is able to relate it* (ſo the vulgar Latin readeth) *through the great fear which ought to be had thereof.* The

The Saints note, that God in t
is wont to uſe two kinds of mercy to
us, a greater mercy and a leſs. The leſs
cy is, when he ſuccours us in our leſs mi
ries, which are the temporal, and ſuch as
only concern the body; and the great mer-
cy, is when he ſuccours us in our great mi-
ſeries, which are the ſpiritual, and which
concern the ſoul. And ſo when *David* ſaw
himſelf in great miſery, of being abandon-
ed and diſpoſſeſſed of God, by the adultery
and murther which he had committed, he
cried out, and beggs the great mercy of
God; *Have mercy upon me O God, after
thy great goodneſſe*, Pſal. 51. 1. They ſay
alſo that there is a great, and a little anger
of God. The leſſer is, when he puniſhes
men here with adverſities, in loſs of goods,
of honour, health, and the like, which on-
ly concern the body; but the great anger
is, when the puniſhment goes ſo far, that
it arrives to the interiour part of the ſoul,
according to that of the Prophet *Jeremy*,
The ſword reaches unto the ſoul, Jer. 4. 10.
And this is that which God ſaith by the
Prophet *Zachary*, *I will be angry, with
my great anger, with that Nation which
is proud and puffed up*, Zach. 1. 15. When

takes a man, and permits him to to hainous ſins in puniſhment of his ſins, this is the great anger of God; theſe are wounds which are given by divine indignation, and they are not as of a Father, but as of a juſt & righteous Judge. Of which wounds, that of the Prophet *Jeremy* may be underſtood; *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel puniſhment*, Jer. 30. 14. And ſo alſo ſaith the Wiſe-man; *The mouth of ſtrange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein.* Finally, pride is ſo wicked a thing, and ſo much abhorred by almighty God, that the Saints ſay, that ſometimes it is good for the proud man to be thus puniſhed by Almighty God, that ſo he may come to be cured of his pride. So ſaith S. *Auguſt. I preſume to ſay, that it is profitable and good for proud men, that God permit them to fall into ſome viſible and external ſin, that ſo they who were very well ſatisfied and pleaſed in themſelves, and were already faln, though they perceived it not; may begin to know and to humble, and diſtruſt themſelves*; according to that of the Wiſe-man, *Prov.* 16. 18. *Pride goeth before deſtruction*;

ction: and an haughty ſpirit
The ſame do S. *Baſil*, and S.
firm. S. *Gregory*, by the occaſion of
of *David*, asks why God permits that
elect, and ſuch as he hath predeſtinated to
eternal life, and on whom he had heaped
up his graces and gifts, ſhould fall ſome-
times into carnal and filthy ſins; and he
anſwers, that the reaſon of it is, becauſe
ſometimes, they who have received great
graces fall into pride, and they have it ſo
rooted, and even wrought into the moſt
intimous part of the heart that they them-
ſelves underſtand it not; but are ſo well
pleaſed, and confident of themſelves, as to
think that God and they are all one. As
it hapned to S. *Peter* the Apoſtle, who
conceived not, that thoſe words of his,
had flowed from pride, when he ſaid,
Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of
thee, yet will I never be offended, Matth.
26. 33. but he thought that it had been
courage in him, and an extraordinary love
which he carried to his Maſter. Therefore
to cure ſuch pride as this, which lies ſo cloſe
and is ſo diſguiſed, as that man is already
faln, though himſelf perceive it not, our
Lord permits ſometimes, that ſuch perſons

fall

ain manifeſt exteriour carnal
o the end that ſo they may
themſelves better, and look more
ctly into their ſouls: and may ſo come
to perceive their pride, which they believ-
d not to be in them before: and whereof
they look for no remedy, and would ſo
have come to periſh; but now by means
of ſuch groſs falls, they know it, and being
humbled now in the ſight of God, they re-
pent both for the one, and the other; and
ſo meet with remedy for both their miſe-
ries at once, as we ſee S. *Peter* did; who
by that viſible and apparent fall of his,
came to know that pride which lay ſo ſe-
cretly within, and he grew to lament it,
and to repent for them both: and thus
was his fall good for him. The ſame hap-
ned alſo to *David*, Pſal. 119. 71. who
therefore ſaith, *O Lord it hath coſt me
dear, I confeſſe it, but yet upon the whole
matter, it hath been good for me that I
have been humbled*, that ſo hereafter I
may learn to ſerve thee, and know how
to abaſe my ſelf as I ought. And as the
wiſe Phyſician, when he is not able to
cure the malady outright, and when the
peccant humor is ſo rebellious and maligne,
that

that he cannot make nature [illegible] vercome it, procures to draw [illegible] exteriour part of the body, that it [illegible] be the better cured: just so, for the cure [illegible] certain haughty and rebellious souls, doth our *Lord* permit them to fall into grievous and exteriour sins, to the end that they may know and humble themselves: and by means of that abasement which appears without, the maligne and pestilent humour may be also cured, which lay close within. And this is a work which God works in *Israel*, which whosoever comes to hear, his very ears shall even tingle for meer fear: these I say, are those great punishments of God, the onely hearing whereof, is able to make men tremble, from head to foot.

But yet our *Lord* who is so full of benignity and mercy, doth never imploy this so rigorous punishment, nor this so lamentable and unhappy remedy, but after having used other means, which were most gentle and sweet. He first sends us other inducements to humble our selves. Sometimes sickness, sometimes a contradiction, sometimes a murmuration, and sometimes a dishonour, when a man is brought

lower

thought. But when these gs will not serve the turn to us, he passes on to spiritual: and ...rit, to things of lesse moment, and afterward by permitting fierce & grievous temtations, such as may bring us so within a hairs breadth, and even perswade us, or at least make us doubt whether we consented or no. That so a man may see and find by good experience, that he cannot overcome them by himself, but may experimentally understand his own misery, and the precise need which he hath of help from heaven: & so may come to distrust his own strength, and may humble himself. And when all this will not serve, then comes that other so violent and so costly cure, of suffering a man to fall into hainous sin, and to be subdued by the temptation. Then comes this Cautery, which is made even by the very fire of hell; to the end that after a man hath even as it were beaten out his brains, he may fall at length upon the just examination and knowledge of what he is, and may at length be content to humble himself by this means, since he would not be brought to do it by any other. By this time I hope we see how mightily it imports us to be humble,

humble, and not to confide or [illegible] our ſelves: and therefore let ev[illegible] ter into account with his own heart, [illegible] conſider what profit he reaps by thoſe [illegible] caſions which God daily ſends for the ma[illegible] king him humble, in the quality of a tender-hearted Phyſician, and of a father, that ſo there may be no need of thoſe other which are ſo violent. *Chaſtiſe me, O Lord, with the chaſtiſement of a Father:* cure thou my pride with afflictions, diſeaſes, diſhonours and affronts, and with as many humiliations as thou art pleaſed to ſend: but ſuffer not, O Lord, that I ſhould ever fall into deliberate and wilful ſin. O Lord, let the Devil have power to touch me in point of honour, and in my health, & let him make another *Job* of me: but permit not that he may ever touch my ſoul. Upon condition that thou, O Lord, never part from me, nor permit me ever to part from thee, whatſoever tribulation may come upon me ſhall be ſure to do me no hurt, but it ſhall rather turn to my good, towards the obtaining of *Humility*, which is ſo acceptable to thee. Grant this, *O Lord*, for Jeſus Chriſts ſake our onely Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

NDerſtanding, O my bleſſed Lord, how diſpleaſing pride is unto thee, and how thou hateſt ſelf-conceit, if I had indeed any underſtanding as I ought, the conſideration thereof would ſufficiently perſwade me, that I ſhould not onely diſlike, but abhorre it, as a mortal and damnable thing, ſince thou, O Lord, doſt ſo abhorre it, that the Angels whom thou createdſt with ſo many perfections, and adornedſt with ſuch beauties and gifts, giving them the poſſeſſion of thy inwardeſt heaven, yet for this ſin onely didſt thou baniſh them thence into the infernal pit, where they ſuffer the condigne puniſhment of their hainous offence, and from that time till this preſent, and from this time for ever to come, the proud thou alwaies haſt and ever wilt abhorre: and they are they on whom it ſeems thou delighteſt to ſhew the power of thy mighty Arm; humbling them, caſting them down, and making them equal with the earth, that they may underſtand themſelves, and not dare to lift up their heads againſt thee. Thou abhorreſt Pride in bodily ſtrength, as thou declaredſt

claredſt in *Goliah*, giving h[illegible] the hands of a young and ten[illegible] was *David*. Thou deteſteſt it in ſe[illegible] ceit and eſtimation, as thou ſhewedſt i[illegible] baſing *Haman*, making him ſerve for Page and cryer of *Mordecai*'s vertues, whom he ſought to deſtroy. It is abominable to thee in them who have it through opinion of their own excellent beauty, ſo as had *Abſalom*, whom thou ſufferedſt to be hanged up by the hair, of which he went ſo proud. It is deteſtable to thee in them who lift up themſelves by reaſon of their great Riches and Dominions, as did *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom therefore thou draveſt out to live and feed among bruit Beaſts. It is odious to thee in them who are opinionated of their own wiſdome, as was manifeſted in *Achitophel*, whom thou ſufferedſt to become his own executioner, by a ſhameful death, becauſe his counſel was not followed. Thou hateſt it in words, thou hateſt it in Vertue and goodneſſe it ſelf, knowing it to be the moth and canker thereof; as thou taughteſt us in the preſumptuous Phariſee, ſending him away deſpiſed and rejected, only becauſe he vaunted before thee his own worth, and ſet forth his own Praiſes.

And

did thy ſervant *Tobit* coun-
pride enter at any time into
derſtanding, nor into any thing thou
eſt, ſayeſt, or doeſt. To conſider this,
O Lord, by ſo many examples evinced, that
Pride is ſo much abominable to thee, and
ſo ſurely and ſharply puniſhed in them in
whom thou findeſt it, were more then ſuffi-
cient, if I had not leſſe then no underſtand-
ing, to breed an abhorring of it in my heart,
and an utter reſtraint thereof, not only in
deeds and words, but the inwardeſt
thoughts of my heart. For though I were
Valiant, yet ſhould I not be like *Goliah*:
If I had Command, yet it would be much
leſſe then *Holophernes*: though a Favou-
rite, yet could I not match *Haman*: and
alſo if I might paſſe others, yet how far muſt
I fall ſhort of *Abſalom* in Beauty; in Ma-
jeſty and Power of *Nebuchadnezzar*; in
Wiſdome of *Achitophel*; in Holineſs and
all other Excellency of the Angels before
their fall? and yet all theſe in their ſeveral
kinds, wherein their hearts were lifted up,
were by thee brought down to the loweſt
of ſhame & confuſion, and to the height of
miſery and calamity, to the proportion of
their Pride & vanity. But if to this I ſhall
add

add the conſideration of nine
and the condition of the thing
for which I am lifted up in mine ow
ceit, either I muſt leave all Pride, or
clean quit all claim to the Underſtanding of
a man. For my being is but earth, and a
clod thereof, ſo frail, ſo poor and beggerly,
that I can neither cloath my ſelf without
ſtripping others, nor maintain mine own,
without taking the lives from Birds, Beaſts,
or Fiſhes. Nor can I breath without aire,
nor ſee without light, nor hear without
ſound, nor live at all without the help of
thy meaneſt creatures. And beſides all this,
ſo encompaſſed with neceſſity, ſo invironed
with wants, of hunger, of thirſt, of ſleep, ſo
tired with labour, ſo beſet with dangers, ſo
overwhelmed with miſeries, as if I rightly
take the eſtimate of my ſelf, I muſt adjudge
my ſelf of all thy other works the moſt
wretched and contemptible. And what a-
las, if I truly weigh them, are thoſe things
which make me ſwell, but lighter and leſs
worth then vanity it ſelf? Every injury of
weather diſtempers my health, the lighteſt
ſickneſs abates my ſtrength, the leaſt pains
overthrow my contents, but a few hours
want of ſuſtenance enfeebles me, a few
dayes

. Riches ſlip away like water
h my fingers, and if not rightly
ey adhere to ſorrows, & increaſe tor-
s hereafter in Hell. Honour vaniſheth
like ſmoak, Nobility is baſeneſs, except it be
ſet in vertue, Applauſe of the world paſſeth
like a dreame in them that give & take it.
Favour of Princes laſteth no longer then
themſelves, and they periſh when they leaſt
think it. Friendſhip is flattery and private
Intereſt. Love is unſound in ſubſtance, and
fickle in durance. Wiſdome is folly, and
Learning is wearineſs. And if the account
be right caſt, our Knowledge amount to no
more then what we do. So that on all hands,
if I rightly conſider, there is no ground but
for *Humility*, no colour but for Lowli-
neſs; & in their ſeveral kinds all things cry
out that I have in me infinite matter of con-
fuſion and ſhame, nothing at all to glory or
priſe my ſelf for, onely my folly, which, as I
am, is more then all the reſt in me, the cauſe
to puff me up. That it is, & onely that, that
makes me lofty, preſumtuous, ſelf-conceited,
vain. Lord, heal me of this frenzy, & reſtore
me again to a right underſtanding, that
with that Humility of ſpirit which I ought,
I may henceforth ſerve thee, eſteeming my
ſelf of all others the leaſt, towards thee no-
thing. *Amen.*

The

The Contents.

Chap. I. Pag.

OF *the excellency of the Vertue of* Humility, *and of the need we have thereof.* 1

II. *That* Humility *is the foundation of all vertue* 8

III. *Wherein it is declared more particularly how Humility is the foundation of all vertues, and this is done by diſcourſing of the chief of them.* 13

IIII. *Of the particular neceſſity which they have of this vertue, who profeſſe to procure the ſalvation of their neighbours ſouls.* 22

V. *Of the firſt degree of* Humility, *which is for a man to think meanly of himſelf.* 42

VI. *Of the knowledge of a mans ſelf, which is the root, and the neceſſary and only means for the obtaining of Humility.* 47

VII.

most principal means for a ing himself, and obtaining lity, which is the consideration of sins. 53

III. *How we are to exercise our selves in the knowledge of what we are, that so we may not be dejected or dismayed.* 60

IX. *Of the great benefit and profit which grows by this exercise of a mans knowing himself.* 68

X. *That the knowledge of ones self, doth not cause dismay, but rather gives courage and strength.* 76

XI. *Of other great benefits and advantages which grow by the exercise of a mans knowledge of himself.* 80

XII. *How much it concerneth us to be exercised in the knowledge of our selves.* 84

XIII. *Of the second degree of Humility: and here it is declared wherein this degree consists.* 94

XIV. *Of some degrees and steps whereby a man may rise to the perfection of this second degree of Humility.* 104

XV. *Of the fourth step, which is to desire to be disesteemed and despised, and to be glad thereof.* 112

XVI. *That the perfectio[n]*
and of all other vertues,
forming the acts thereof wit[h]
and chearfulneſſe; and how mu[ch]
imports towards our perſeverance
vertue. 11

XVII. *Of ſome means for the obtaining of this ſecond degree of Humility, and particularly of the example of Chriſt our Lord.* 123

XVIII. *Of ſome humane conſiderations, whereby we may be humble.* 130

XIX. *Of other humane reaſons which will help us to be humble.* 136

XX. *The way to be valued and eſteemed by men, is to get vertue and humility.* 143

XXI. *That* Humility *is the means to obtain inward peace of mind, and that without it this cannot be had.* 150

XXII. *Of another kind of means more effectual for the obtaining the vertue of Humility.* 161

XXIII. *That we muſt take heed of ſpeaking any ſuch words as may redound to our own praiſe.* 171

XXIV. *In what manner we ought to examine*

r consciences concerning the umility. 176
How it may be compatible with mility, to be accounted of by men. 187
XXVI. Of the third degree of Humility. 197
XXVII. It is declared wherein the third degree of Humility consists. 206
XXVIII. The foresaid truth is further declared. 212
XXIX. The third degree of Humility is further declared. 217
XXX. How good and holy men may with truth esteem themselves lesse then others, yea, and affirm themselves to be the greatest sinners of the world. 226
XXXI. That this third degree of Humility is a good means to overcome all temptations, and to obtain the perfection of all the vertues. 235
XXXII. That Humility is not contrary to Magnanimity, but rather that it is the foundation and cause thereof. 241
XXXIII. Of the great benefits and advantages which are in this third degree of Humility. 250

XXXIV.

XXXIV. *Of the great me[illegible] vours which God ſhews to [illegible] and why he exalts them ſo high.*

XXXV. *How much it imports us t[illegible] take our ſelves to Humility, to ſupply thereby whatſoever is wanting to us in vertue and perfection, to the end that God may not humble us by puniſhing us.* 264

F I N I S.